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Three tankers hit mines crossing Hormuz strait

Iranian Revolutionary Guards said yesterday that their naval mines halted three tankers attempting to travel the Strait of Hormuz via routes considered illegal by Tehran. "Two violating oil tankers were set ablaze and halted due to the explosion of mines planted by the brave sailors of the IRGC Navy at an illegal crossing point in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz," the Guards said in a statement on their official Sepah News website. The Guards later said in a statement carried by state TV that a third oil tanker "exploded and caught fire after striking a naval mine south of the Strait of Hormuz". The statement added that the tanker "carrying over 2mn barrels of crude oil, had deactivated all of its radar and navigation systems". (AFP)

Qatar, France deepen bonds on historic visit



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and French President Emmanuel Macron held an official talks session at Lusail Palace yesterday. At the outset, His Highness the Amir welcomed the French president and his accompanying delegation, wishing them a pleasant stay. He expressed great pleasure over this historic visit — the first state visit by a president of the French Republic to the State of Qatar — noting that it reflects the depth of bilateral relations and the strength of the strategic partnership between the two friendly nations. His Highness also expressed his aspiration to further enhance this partnership and co-operation across various fields. For his part, President Macron



expressed his sincere thanks and deep appreciation to HH the Amir for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to him and the accompanying delegation. He affirmed his country's commitment to developing co-operative relations and advancing them toward broader horizons that meet the aspirations of both nations and their friendly peoples. During the session, the two sides reviewed bilateral co-operation and the strategic partnership between the two countries, as well as ways to strengthen and develop

them across various sectors, primarily the economic, investment, security, and defence spheres. The session was attended by HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani; HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs, Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani; HE the Chief of the Amiri Diwan, Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Mubarak al-Khulaifi; and a lineup of ministers and senior officials. Also in attendance on the French side were Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans, Catherine Vautrin; Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Noel Barrot; Minister Delegate attached to the Minister for the Armed Forces and

Veterans, Alice Ruffo; and several other high-ranking officials. HH the Amir and President Macron had earlier held a bilateral meeting, during which they reviewed the friendly relations and co-operation between the two countries, as well as developments in the region. Upon his arrival at Lusail Palace, the French president was accorded an official reception. The ceremony began with a 21-gun salute, accompanied by a performance of the Qatari 'Ardha' traditional dance and displays by the horse and camel-mounted guards. This was followed by the playing of both national anthems, after which the two sides exchanged introductions with the respective official delegations. (QNA)

Amir hosts dinner banquet for French president, delegation

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, hosted an official dinner banquet at Lusail Palace in honour of French President Emmanuel Macron, and his accompanying delegation. During the function, HH the Amir delivered a speech welcoming the French president, His Highness also emphasised the depth of the partnership between the two nations and the significance of this visit in strengthening co-operation across various sectors. His Highness expressed his appreciation for the spirit of cordiality and mutual

understanding that characterised the visit. He also voiced his confidence that the partnership, which is built upon mutual respect and shared values, will continue to flourish to serve the interests of both nations and their peoples, while contributing to international stability, security, and peace. For his part, the French president expressed his gratitude to HH the Amir, praising the partnership and the alignment of visions between the two countries. He highlighted the ongoing co-operation and noted that the frequent high-level exchanges reflect a

dynamic and active co-ordination between the two nations. President Macron also lauded the economic partnership and mutual investments, especially in the fields of technology, energy, and industry and affirmed a commitment to continue working within the "One Planet" Sovereign Wealth Funds initiative to support investment in the sectors of the future. The banquet was attended by Her Highness Consort of the Amir, Sheikha Jowaher bint Hamad bin Suhaim al-Thani. Also in attendance were His Highness Personal

Representative of the Amir, Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad al-Thani; His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalifa al-Thani; His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Thani; HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani. The event was also attended by HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem, along with a lineup of Sheikhs, ministers, dignitaries, senior state officials, and business leaders. (QNA)

Advanced security tech on show at Milipol 2026

By Joseph Varghese
Staff Reporter

The 16th edition of Milipol Qatar 2026, held under the gracious patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, got underway at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre yesterday as HE Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force "Lekhwiya," attended the opening ceremony.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by distinguished guests, including Ministers of Interior, Justice and Security, as well as police chiefs, commanders and commissioners from several brotherly and friendly countries. **To Page 2**



HE Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force "Lekhwiya," visiting one of the pavilions at the exhibition.



Dignitaries at the opening ceremony.

Qatar calls on Iran to safeguard Gulf waters from conflict, disaster

Qatar urges Iran to ensure freedom of navigation in Hormuz

By Ayman Adly
Staff Reporter

Qatar has urged Iran to reconsider threats to target Internet cables in the Strait of Hormuz, warning that disruptions to telecommunications, maritime navigation and international trade would carry far-reaching consequences for the region and the global economy.

Ibrahim bin Sultan al-Hashimi, director of the Media and Communication Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), called on Tehran to carefully assess who would bear the greatest cost if communications were disrupted or maritime traffic through the strategic waterway was affected.

Speaking during MoFA's weekly media briefing, al-Hashimi stressed that Qatar's mediation efforts to resolve the crisis between the United States and Iran remain ongoing, with diplomatic contacts, visits, and exchanges of messages continuing despite the difficulties involved in the negotiations.

He said Doha, as a mediator, was working tirelessly to secure an immediate and sustainable



Ibrahim bin Sultan al-Hashimi at the MoFA press briefing yesterday. **PICTURE:** Shaji Kayamkulam

resolution through dialogue and negotiations, stressing that diplomatic efforts had not stopped and that the exchange of messages between the parties remained active.

"The priority is to bring the parties closer together and encourage Washington and Tehran to reach a settlement that safeguards regional stability," al-Hashimi said.

He also reiterated that the crisis would not be resolved through military means, warning that prolonging the confrontation would raise costs for the Middle East and the wider world. Continued escalation could have se-

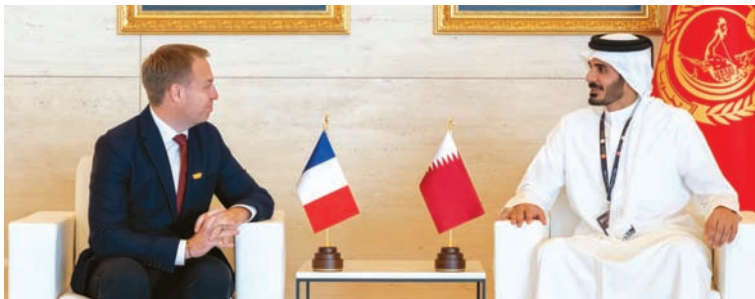
rious repercussions for the global economy and energy supplies at a time when de-escalation and a return to diplomacy are increasingly urgent. However, he said Qatar hopes to achieve a solution soon and that Doha will continue working relentlessly with all parties involved.

Al-Hashimi further stressed that the security of the waters of the Strait of Hormuz is inseparable from the broader security of the region. Gulf countries depend heavily on their surrounding waters for seawater desalination, maritime transport, fisheries and the protection of marine resources. Any attack targeting the strait would eventually pose a direct threat to the interests and well-being of the region's populations. He placed responsibility on Iran to help safeguard the waters and comply with international laws governing freedom of navigation and the protection of the marine environment.

Besides, he pointed out that the US is geographically far removed from the Strait, while Israel does not rely on the waters of the Gulf, and that the greatest damage would be borne by the countries of the region, including Iran itself. **To Page 2**



Minister meets top Lebanon, France, Uzbekistan officials



HE the Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani met yesterday with Minister Delegate to the Ministry of the Interior of the French Republic Jean-Didier Berger. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Milipol Qatar 2026 Exhibition, held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) in Doha on October 20-22. Following the meeting, HE Sheikh Khalifa attended the signing ceremony for the action plan for security co-operation between the ministries of interior of Qatar and France for the 2027-30 period. On the Qatari side, the plan was signed by HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani, while Berger signed on behalf of the French side. The plan is an extension of the strategic partnership between the two nations and aims to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination, as well as the exchange of expertise in security-related fields. HE Sheikh Khalifa also held separate meetings yesterday with Lebanon's Minister of Interior and Municipalities Ahmad al-Hajjar and Uzbekistan's Commander of the National Guard Bakhodir Tashmatov. - **QNA**

Macron welcomed to Doha



French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Doha yesterday for a state visit. Macron and his accompanying delegation were welcomed at Hamad International Airport by HE the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan al-Thani. Also present at the reception were Qatar's ambassador to France Sheikh Ali bin Jassim al-Thani and the French ambassador in Doha Arnaud Pescheux. - **QNA**

Experts stress importance of strengthening digital governance frameworks

Participants in a panel discussion at the Doha International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Security, held alongside the 16th Milipol Qatar 2026, stressed the importance of strengthening artificial intelligence (AI) governance frameworks, balancing technological innovation with responsible use, protecting data and addressing cybersecurity challenges to ensure the safe and sustainable adoption of modern technologies.

Held at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), the session was moderated by the assistant director of the Systems Development Department at the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Lieutenant-Colonel Dr Ali Ahmed al-Binali.

It examined global approaches to AI ethics, governance and responsible use, with the participation of officials and experts in technology and digital security.

Adviser to the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Khalid Nasser al-Hashmi highlighted the need for comprehensive partnerships and a balanced approach to developing AI governance and regulatory frameworks that encourage innovation while protecting society and ensuring a secure digital environment.

He called for a broader partnership involving the public and private sectors and citizens, noting that the traditional public-private partnership concept was no longer sufficient if it remained merely a slogan.

Al-Hashmi added that Qatar's governance model involves engaging the private sector, industrial, technology and media sectors, as well as citizens, in relevant discussions, given the direct impact of policies on individuals and future generations.

The director of the Security Systems Department at the MoI's General Directorate of Communications and Information Systems, Lieutenant-Colonel Eng. Ali Abdullah al-Suwaidi, meanwhile said that the ministry had made significant progress in data analytics

and AI-powered security analysis, helping enhance public safety and security.

He said that smart systems and video analytics operating without direct human intervention had detected more than 53,000 traffic incidents and violations, including stopping in yellow box junctions, improper overtaking, mobile phone use while driving and driving at low speeds in fast lanes.

These systems, Lt-Col al-Suwaidi said, provide early warnings that support field operations and improve decision-making.

He stressed that AI technologies were being deployed responsibly in accordance with key principles, including legal compliance, privacy, transparency, fairness and accountability.

Lt-Col al-Suwaidi emphasised that AI should support, rather than replace, human personnel and that resource management must remain equitable.

He noted that a dedicated unit overseeing data flows, risk management and policies assesses economic and operational feasibility, develops and validates tests, and monitors potential challenges to enable an immediate institutional response.

Meanwhile, the vice-president for training and executive director of the Artificial Intelligence Centre for Security at Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, Dr Abdulrazzaq al-Marjan, underscored the importance of developing national capabilities, strengthening technological sovereignty and verifying AI systems' operations to ensure the reliability of their outputs.

He said that international discussions on AI and decision-making had highlighted the growing need to link technological risks with decision-making at both national and global levels.

Academic institutions, he added, could help countries develop the capabilities needed to verify and maintain control over AI systems.

The Doha International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Security, runs until October 22. - **QNA**

Minister tours Milipol Qatar 2026

Following the opening of the 16th edition of the Milipol Qatar exhibition and conference, HE the Minister of State for Interior Affairs Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Faisal bin Mohammed al-Thani toured the event's pavilions to view the latest technologies, innovations, and advanced solutions in the fields of internal security and safety.

He received briefings from representatives of participating companies and organisations regarding the key security products and technologies on display, as well as their role in advancing security and safety systems and enhancing their efficiency. - **QNA**



Milipol Qatar is a vital 'platform for security'

Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani has stated that the ongoing Milipol Qatar 2026 provides an important international platform for showcasing cutting-edge security technologies and innovations, further reinforcing Qatar's position as a regional and international hub for specialised security exhibitions.

Qatar Chamber is participating in the 16th edition of Milipol Qatar 2026, which will run until October 22 at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC).

Sheikh Khalifa also highlighted the significant progress Milipol Qatar has made over successive editions, noting that it has established itself as one of the world's leading exhibitions for homeland security technologies.

Furthermore, he emphasised that Milipol Qatar offers promising economic and investment opportunities by fostering partnerships between Qatari private-sector companies and leading international firms, facilitating technology transfer, and developing national expertise.

He also highlighted the strategic importance of holding the exhibition alongside the Doha International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Security, noting the growing role of artificial intelligence (AI) in strengthening security systems, analysing data, and anticipating risks.

Sheikh Khalifa reaffirmed Qatar Chamber's commitment to encouraging private-sector companies to benefit from such events, build strategic partnerships, and contribute to economic diversification in



Qatar Chamber chairman Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani and Federation of GCC Chambers secretary-general Saleh bin Hamad al-Sharqi during a tour of Milipol 2026.

line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

Saleh bin Hamad al-Sharqi, secretary-general of the Federation of GCC Chambers, lauded the exhibition's organisation and the number of participating exhibitors, commending its role in strengthening co-operation between Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) companies and participating businesses, while opening new avenues for knowledge and expertise exchange and exploring trade and investment partnerships.

Qatar Chamber is showcasing its services for business owners, companies, and members at its pavilion, while answering visitors' enquiries about Qatar's investment climate, business establishment procedures, commercial activities, and the services it provides to the private sector.

Qatar urges Iran to safeguard Gulf waters from conflict, disaster

From Page 1

Al-Hashimi called for an end to attacks on vessels and warned against incidents involving naval mines and oil spills, stressing that the resulting environmental and economic damage could extend far beyond the borders of the country responsible. He said such actions must stop immediately, and the Strait of Hormuz must reopen to ensure the safety and continuity of maritime traffic.

He warned that a prolonged shipping crisis would heighten regional risks and compound the economic consequences of the wider confrontation. Commenting on the visit of the French President Emmanuel Macron to Qatar, he said, the visit reflects the depth of relations between the two countries and represents a natural continuation of efforts to strengthen and build on these ties. He noted that France has taken commendable positions, both during the current crisis and on other occasions, and has long been a friend and ally of Qatar.

He explained that Qatari-French talks, followed by the two sides' strategic dialogue, offer an opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations further and expand co-operation across various fields, including energy, the economy, investment, and defence. He also highlighted the longstanding, distinguished relations and fruitful co-operation between the two countries.

Regarding diversifying partnerships and developing defence capabilities, he said, it is natural for Qatar to diversify its partnerships and continue building its defence capabilities.

"It is natural for all countries in the region to be capable of deterrence and self-defence, while developing their capabilities and diversifying their allies and strategic partnerships in the field of defence," he added.

Advanced security technology on show at Milipol 2026

From Page 1

Senior military and security officials from Qatar, prominent experts and specialists from around the world, and representatives of leading international companies specialising in homeland security and safety were also in attendance.

Alongside Milipol Qatar 2026, the Global Exhibition for Homeland Security and Safety, the Ministry of Interior is also organising the Doha International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Security.

Both the exhibition and the conference run until tomorrow, providing a platform for security officials, industry leaders, specialists, and technology providers to exchange expertise, explore emerging innovations, and strengthen international co-operation.

The exhibition is expected to give participating companies and government entities opportunities to explore solutions that address evolving security requirements, including the deployment of modern equipment, integrated security systems, and technology-driven approaches to protecting people and infrastructure.

Following the opening ceremony, HE Sheikh Khalifa, accompanied by distinguished guests and senior officials, toured the exhibition halls and pavilions.

This year's exhibition features more than 270 local and international companies and seven international pavilions, covering an exhibition area of 23,000sqm.

The exhibition offers an international platform for presenting advanced security technologies and fostering co-operation.

The exhibition is also a platform to explore the latest security technologies and solutions, strengthen co-operation and facilitate the exchange of expertise.

Milipol Qatar 2026 also features seven international pavilions: the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, North America, China, the Czech Republic, and France.

In addition, an outdoor display area showcases the Ministry of Interior's vehicle fleet, highlighting the equipment and operational capabilities used to maintain security and public safety.

A notable feature of this year's edition is the introduction of the 30th Anniversary Awards, marking the exhibition's 30th year.

The awards recognise the companies that have exhibited with Milipol Qatar for the last three decades, honouring their loyalty and

contributions to the exhibition's growth and continued success.

According to the organisers, the exhibition's 30-year history reflects the continued importance of international co-operation in a sector where technological developments and increasingly complex security challenges require the exchange of knowledge, expertise and best practices.

Milipol Qatar serves as a leading international platform for exchanging expertise and showcasing the latest technologies and solutions in homeland security and safety.

The Doha International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Security provides a forum to explore AI applications in security operations and address challenges, reflecting Qatar's role in strengthening regional and international security co-operation.

Barzan Holdings launches more than a dozen Qatar-made defence products



By Peter Alagos
Business Editor

Barzan Holdings unveiled a suite of more than a dozen locally manufactured and integrated defence technologies at the opening of Milipol Qatar 2026 yesterday, underscoring the country's push toward sovereign technological capabilities and domestic defence production.

Speaking to *Gulf Times* on the sidelines of the event, Barzan Holdings commercial relationship manager Ahmad al-Mulla (**pictured**) said the new capabilities span five operational categories, including autonomous systems, electronic warfare, commu-

nications, firearms, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

He highlighted that the defence firm builds and manages its technologies directly in Qatar, functioning as a master integrator for custom specifications.

The product launch features two communication and cybersecurity systems, comprising the Secure Comms VPN and Secure Comms CHAT.

In the domain of unmanned aerial systems, Barzan Holdings introduced five drones tailored for tactical operations, including the ISR - VTOL 400, the ISR Quadcopter - H-Silent, and three First-Person View options: the FPV Drone - 7", FPV Drone - 10", and FPV Drone - 15".

Al-Mulla noted that these aerial platforms feature interchangeable payloads designed for flexible operational profiles.

"Depending on the mission, the payload can be changed, making the system essentially plug-and-play," he said. "It can be configured for surveillance, intelligence gathering, kamikaze operations, or interception."

For maritime security, the company introduced two autonomous surface capabilities: the Rasid USV and the Barzan Conversion Solution Coastguard USV.

Al-Mulla revealed that the Coastguard USV represents a pioneering project built locally alongside state security organs.

"We are unveiling our unmanned surface

vessel conversion solution, the first project of its kind developed domestically in collaboration with the Qatari Coast Guard at the Ministry of Interior," he said.

Under electronic warfare, Barzan Holdings presented Full-Cycle Integrated Air Defence Services.

The initiative is supported by a joint venture with Ukraine's Carmine Sky to deliver layered air defence protecting critical national infrastructure.

The launch also includes three light arms: the BIG556 - 4.5", BIG556 - 7", and QI Corner rifles, al-Mulla said.

He affirmed that all the projects reinforce domestic manufacturing while serving the strategic needs of the Ministry of Interior.

Minister takes part in Afghan Co-ordination Group meeting

THE Minister of State for International Co-operation Dr Maryam bint Ali bin Nasser al-Misnad participated yesterday in the meeting of the Afghanistan Co-ordination Group, being convened in Doha from Oct 20-21.

Addressing the meeting, HE Dr al-Misnad extended the State of Qatar's gratitude to Switzerland, the United Nations, the World Bank, and all participating governments, institutions, and partners for their continued commitment to the Afghan people. She emphasised that Afghanistan is most in need of enduring international engagement, clear priorities, and practical co-operation.

Doha has held that it would remain a destination for addressing intractable issues through dialogue and is honoured to host this meeting and contribute to its outcomes, Dr al-Misnad underlined.

She continued that the State of Qatar's belief in dialogue has driven its efforts on Afghanistan since the launch of the Doha peace process for Afghanistan in 2013, noting that the State of Qatar has supported peaceful solutions based on dialogue and preventive diplomacy.

Qatar also facilitated communication between Afghan parties, the UN, and international partners, Dr al-Misnad highlighted, noting that Qatar is pleased to host the UN-led Doha peace process, which has provided a framework for more cohesive and co-ordinated international engagement.

HE Dr al-Misnad went on to remark that the State of Qatar believes that the future of Afghanistan should be charted through a comprehensive political process led by the Afghans themselves, coupled with essential respect for its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

At the same time, Afghanistan can neither be separated from its regional periphery nor from the challenges facing the international



community, the minister said, adding that its stability matters not only to the Afghan people but also to regional security, economic connectivity, and international peace.

The State of Qatar has participated in all political, development, and humanitarian initiatives related to Afghanistan, such as the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR) and the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund, alongside its membership in this honoured group, Dr al-Misnad stressed.

She noted that over the past decade, the State of Qatar has provided and pledged nearly USD150mn to support humanitarian and development projects in critical sectors, including health care, education, and emergency response.

HE Dr al-Misnad further recalled that Afghanistan continues to face pressure, as humanitarian needs remain profoundly grave and economic fragility continues to affect families, communities, and commercial activities, with returns and displacement placing additional pressure on already strained services and limited livelihoods.

She noted that humanitarian funding faces substantial pressure, while the need for support remains acute in essential health care, nutrition, education, water, and food security.

Dr al-Misnad explained that these issues require the closest co-ordination among donors, the UN and international financial institutions, regional organisations, and implementing partners. She stressed that assistance must be delivered transparently, with accountability and in accordance with humanitarian principles.

The Afghan people should not bear the consequences of fragmented institutional efforts or conflicting approaches among the entities seeking to assist them, HE the Minister suggested.

She reaffirmed that the State of Qatar will continue to support humanitarian and development efforts through its national institutions, in close co-operation with UN bodies and international partners. She underscored that the overriding objective is to reach those most in need, including women and young people, given their pivotal role in shaping the country's socioeconomic future.

The minister further explained that the Doha Process and its affiliated working groups provide a valuable platform for advancing this objective, stating that Qatar welcomes sustained attention to counter-narcotics, private-sector development, and other practical areas in which international co-operation can be translated into concrete and substantive results.

This group is encouraged to maintain the momentum of this process and ensure that Afghanistan remains a top priority on the international agenda, with technical co-operation complementing the broader political pathway rather than serving as a substitute for it, Dr al-Misnad underscored.

Concluding her remarks, HE Dr al-Misnad suggested that this meeting should be leveraged to identify shared priorities with greater clarity and accuracy, while reinforcing practical co-operation and renewing commitments to the Afghan people. (QNA)

Singapore PM leaves Qatar



The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the Republic of Singapore Lawrence Wong left Doha yesterday following an official visit to the State of Qatar. Wong and his accompanying delegation were seen off at Hamad International Airport by HE the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Subaie, the ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Republic of Singapore Abdulaziz bin Ahmed Almaliki Aljehani, and the ambassador of the Republic of Singapore in Doha Pong Kok Tian. (QNA)

Al-Attiyah meets Lebanese agriculture minister

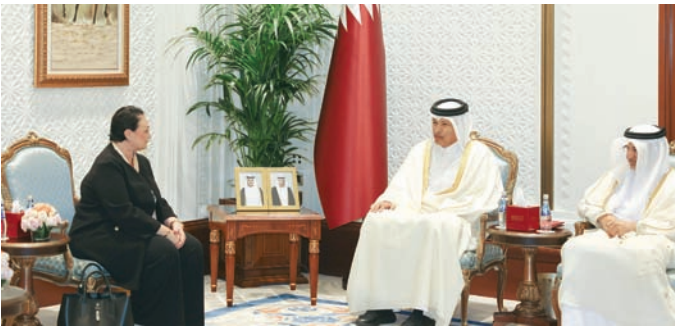


HE the Minister of Municipality Abdullah bin Hamad bin Abdullah al-Attiyah met yesterday with Lebanon's Minister of Agriculture Dr Nizar Hani. The meeting discussed bilateral co-operation relations between the two countries in areas of common interest, with a particular focus on agriculture and food security. (QNA)

Shura Speaker holds talks with Panama, Malta and US diplomats



HE Shura Council Speaker Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem has held separate meetings with the ambassadors of Panama and Malta and the acting charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Doha to discuss bilateral co-operation and regional and international developments. During his meetings with the ambassador of the Republic of Panama Johnny Mayani and the ambassador of Malta Maria Camilleri



Calleja, the two sides discussed ways to strengthen relations between Qatar and their respective countries across various fields, particularly parliamentary co-operation. The discussions also covered several issues of mutual interest.

In a separate meeting with Chris Hodges, acting charge d'affaires at the US embassy in Qatar, HE al-Ghanem discussed strategic co-operation between Doha and

Washington and ways to further develop bilateral relations. The meeting also addressed the latest developments in the region and wider international affairs, as well as efforts to promote security and stability and support peaceful solutions to crises. The meetings underline Qatar's engagement with international partners on parliamentary ties, strategic co-operation and regional stability. (QNA)

Al-Mannai meets US official



HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammed bin Ali al-Mannai met yesterday with the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for the Middle East and Africa, Mark Mitchell. During the meeting, they discussed means of co-operation between the State of Qatar and the United States of America and explored opportunities to develop the partnership in the digital sector. The meeting also addressed opportunities to strengthen co-operation in the digital economy and investment, alongside ways to develop collaboration in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship. (QNA)

Malaysian think-tank chief calls for dialogue amid West Asia tensions

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

MALAYSIA has warned that escalating tensions in West Asia could trigger wider economic and security repercussions, urging de-escalation, dialogue and stronger regional co-operation at the ongoing Doha Global Security Forum.

Professor Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah, executive chairman and chief executive of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, told *Gulf Times* that the conflict's consequences extended far beyond the region, affecting Southeast Asia and the wider global economy.

He highlighted the impact of disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, warning that rising insurance and freight costs could eventually affect household budgets through higher living costs.

"Rise in insurance costs, shipping costs, which will spiral and snowball into direct impact onto the very table of households in terms of cost of living," he said, pointing to the wider consequences of energy supply disruptions.

Faiz also expressed concern over attacks on civilian infrastructure and energy installations, stressing that Malaysia opposed violence against civilian facilities across the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries.

He said Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim had been engaging with Gulf leaders, including Qatar's leadership, to express concern and support amid regional tensions.

Malaysia, he added, would continue using its diplomatic influence to encourage peace and prevent further escalation. "As a middle power, occupying the middle rung, we punch beyond our weight in that sense, to express our soft power," Faiz said, describing Malaysia's approach as one of promoting dialogue, justice and de-escalation.

He also underlined the importance of the Doha Global Security Forum, arguing that security discussions should focus not only on conflict but also on creating conditions for peace.

"Security is to bring peace," he said, adding that international platforms



Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

could build understanding across countries and highlight opportunities to reduce violence.

Beyond West Asia, Faiz identified tensions in the South China Sea and strategic competition between the United States and China as challenges requiring sustained regional engagement.

He said Malaysia's foreign policy was guided by "active non-alignment", which meant maintaining independence without withdrawing from international affairs.

"We are not pivoting to anywhere. We are pivoting to ourselves," he said, explaining that Malaysia sought to maintain strong investment ties with the US while sustaining trade relations with China.

He said Malaysia's participation in Brics supported economic diversification and gave the country greater strategic choices, rather than signalling a shift towards one power over another.

Faiz also stressed the importance of Asean centrality and cohesion, saying regional co-operation remained essential to maintaining stability.

Malaysia would continue advocating peace, neutrality and dialogue, he said, while working to narrow the divide between the Global North and Global South.

For Faiz, the priority is clear: countries must remain engaged, even amid disagreement, because sustained dialogue offers a path towards reducing tensions and preventing conflict from spreading.

Adviser to PM participates in GSF session

THE Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed al-Ansari participated in a discussion session titled "Chokepoints, Supply Chains, and the Diplomacy of De-escalation" at the Global Security Forum (GSF 2026) in Doha.

In his remarks, Dr al-Ansari stressed the importance of continuing diplomatic mediation and de-escalation efforts, noting that successful mediation depends on trust in the negotiation process and mediators.

He also emphasised the need to keep negotiations away from media pressure that could undermine prospects for reaching agreements.



He warned of the consequences of continued regional escalation and called for stronger regional dialogue and international co-operation to resolve conflicts and achieve stability.

He also reaffirmed Qatar's support for the sovereignty of

Saudi Arabia and the legitimate Yemeni government.

Regarding Gaza, Dr al-Ansari said lasting peace requires enabling the Palestinian people to realise their legitimate aspirations for an independent state and providing a genuine

political horizon that ensures security and stability.

He stressed the importance of developing the concept of global peace supply chains by pooling countries' capabilities and strengthening multilateral co-operation in mediation, conflict prevention and reconstruction. He warned that the world invests more in wars than in peace.

Dr al-Ansari concluded that peacebuilding is a shared international responsibility requiring a shift from temporary crisis responses to systematic, sustainable action.

Signing peace agreements, he said, is not the end of the process but the beginning of efforts to address the root causes of conflicts and consolidate stability. (QNA)

Al-Ansari meets Canada PM's principal secretary

HE the Adviser to the Prime Minister and Official Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Majed al-Ansari met yesterday with the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of Canada, Scott Gilmore, on the sidelines of the Global Security Forum in Doha. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the co-operative relations between the two countries and ways to support and strengthen them. They also discussed the latest regional developments, specifically ongoing diplomatic efforts and joint co-ordination aimed at de-escalating tensions and promoting security and stability in the region, along with a number of other topics of mutual interest. (QNA)

Investment and Trade Court highlights its role in achieving prompt justice

The Investment and Trade Court participated in a workshop examining its role in buttressing the investment and commercial climate and achieving prompt justice. Organised by Qatar University (QU)'s Career Development Center in collaboration with the College of Law, the workshop

drilled down on the impact of judicial specialisation on improving the quality of judgments and expediting the resolution of disputes. It also addressed the course of a case before the court and the role of the case management office in preparing cases for adjudication.

The workshop further highlighted the impact of digital transformation and electronic services on developing litigation procedures and fostering the efficiency of judicial operations, underscoring the substantial role of technology in advancing judicial services.

The event drew several judges and legal researchers from the court, alongside teaching staff and QU law students, as part of efforts to shore up ongoing collaboration between the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) and academic institutions and bring theory and practice closer together. (QNA)

MoI undersecretary meets Interpol official, Egyptian assistant minister of interior



HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Abdullah bin Khalaf bin Hattab al-Kaabi, met separately yesterday with the Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol), Valdecy Urquiza, and Assistant Minister of Interior for the Security Sector, Major General Sherif Raouf, during their visit to the country to participate in the Milipol Qatar 2026 Exhibition and Conference. During the meeting, they discussed prospects of joint co-operation in security-related fields, and ways to support and develop them, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

QMC chief attends GCC information ministry undersecretaries' meeting



Trinidad and Tobago president receives credentials of Qatar's ambassador

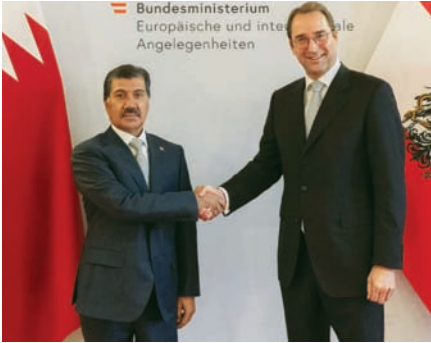


The President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Christine Carla Kangaloo received the credentials of Salman bin Nabit al-Khulaifi as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary (non-resident) of the State of Qatar to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The ambassador conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the president of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, along with the Amir's wishes for her good health and happiness, and for the continued progress and prosperity of the government and people of Trinidad and Tobago. For her part, the president entrusted the ambassador to convey her greetings to the Amir, wishing him good health and happiness, and wishing the State of Qatar continued progress, development, and prosperity. The president also wished the ambassador success in his duties, assuring him of full support to elevate bilateral relations between the two countries toward closer co-operation across various fields. **(QNA)**

HE the CEO of the Qatar Media Corporation (QMC), Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulaziz bin Jassim al-Thani, participated in the meeting of undersecretaries of the GCC ministries of information, held via video conference. The meeting addressed a number of topics on the agenda, as well as ways to enhance media co-operation and co-ordination among the GCC member states. This is intended to contribute to the development of joint Gulf media efforts and to unify approaches and perspectives on issues of common interest. The meeting also discussed topics to be submitted to the meeting of the GCC Ministers of Information, in preparation for their discussion and the adoption of appropriate decisions thereon. **(QNA)**

Qatar, Austria hold round of political consultations

A round of political consultations between the foreign ministries of the State of Qatar and the Republic of Austria was held in Vienna yesterday. The Qatari delegation was headed by HE Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Ahmed bin Hassan al-Hammadi, while the Austrian side was headed by the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, Nikolaus Marschik. The consultations discussed bilateral co-operation and ways to support and strengthen relations between the two countries. Qatar's ambassador to Austria, Jassim Yaqoub al-Hammadi, and the delegation accompanying HE Dr al-Hammadi attended the meeting. **(QNA)**



Qatar participates in 11th meeting of GCC Railways Authority Council



The State of Qatar participated in the 11th Meeting of the GCC Railways Authority Council, held via videoconference yesterday. HE the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport Mohammed Abdullah al-Maadeed represented Qatar at the meeting, which was attended by representatives of GCC member states. Key topics discussed included the latest developments regarding the general agreement to link GCC countries via the Gulf Railway Project, and the outcomes of the project's operational and executive plan. The meeting also addressed progress on projects currently being carried out by the authority, most notably supporting and developing the GCC Railways Authority and preparing its strategy to enhance the authority's institutional work and strengthen its role in overseeing the implementation of the Gulf Railway Project. **(QNA)**

Qatar joins UN biodiversity conference in Armenia

Qatar is participating in the 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP17), being held in Armenia's capital, Yerevan, from October 19-30. The Qatari delegation, represented by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, is joining representatives of countries, international organisations and environmental experts to discuss key challenges and priorities in biodiversity conservation. The conference coincides with the 12th meeting of the parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the sixth meeting of the parties to the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use. Discussions at COP17 cover the protection of endangered wildlife, the restoration of degraded ecosystems, improved management of protected areas and the development of monitoring mechanisms. Participants are also examining ways to mobilise financial

resources and strengthen international co-operation to support biodiversity conservation. Qatar's environment ministry said the country's participation reflected its continued commitment to protecting biodiversity and preserving natural resources through national programmes and projects. These initiatives include protecting and breeding native wildlife, rehabilitating raddas - natural depressions that support vegetation in Qatar's arid landscape - expanding plant cover, conserving endangered species and safeguarding mangrove forests and coral reefs. The country is also working to strengthen the sustainable management of its nature reserves. The ministry said the conference provided an opportunity to learn from international initiatives, exchange scientific and technical expertise and explore partnerships with relevant international organisations to improve national conservation programs. **(QNA)**

Qatar calls for co-operation to combat organised crime

The State of Qatar affirmed that addressing transnational organised crime requires strengthening international co-operation, upholding multilateralism, and effectively implementing relevant international agreements, given the growing complexity of those crimes and their entanglement with corruption, drugs, money laundering and terrorism. This came during the State of Qatar's speech, delivered by head of Qatar's delegation, Dr Abdullah al-Mal, before the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC), held in Vienna. Dr al-Mal stressed that the increasingly transnational nature of crime, its growing level of organisation, and its links to other forms of criminal activity pose a major

challenge to national and collective security, undermine sustainable development and the rule of law, and threaten the security of states, adding that effectively addressing these threats requires coordinated responses, stronger multilateral cooperation, and the proper implementation of international conventions, foremost among them the UNTOC. Through its institutions and agreements, multilateralism provides a framework for coordination and co-operation in addressing shared threats, he noted, describing it as the bulwark that unites peoples and preserves humanity. Dr al-Mal highlighted the progress made through international co-operation in implementing the convention and its protocols since the previous session, as well as the achievements



outlined in the reports submitted to the current session by the UN-ODC. In the context of confronting emerging threats, he pointed out that Qatar was among the first countries to ratify the UN Convention against Cybercrime, urging other countries to sign and ratify the treaty to facilitate its entry into force as soon as possible and strengthen collective capacity to combat cybercrime. He pointed out the growing international awareness over the

past two years of the risks posed by crimes affecting the environment and the illicit trafficking of cultural property, underscoring the importance of international conferences in strengthening co-operation to combat organised crime and related offences. Dr al-Mal highlighted Qatar's efforts to deepen its engagement with the international legal framework for combating organised crime, noting that the country had acceded to the Convention and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, and subsequently joined the Protocols against the Smuggling of Migrants and the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms in March 2026. Dr al-Mal reaffirmed his country's pride in its longstanding partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime **(QNA)**



QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	LTC/C/IRE/7871/26 EPRS CLUB PIPELINE REPAIR TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT	18/10/2026 to 01/11/2026	0	160,000	16/11/2026

Scope of Work:
The objective is to provide the Repair Tools and Equipment required for emergency incident management of subsea pipeline systems, including clamps, connectors, wrapping and other associated repair support tools for Emergency Pipeline Repair systems (EPRS) Execution Readiness Phase and Execution Response & Repair Phases. Company also envisages multiaward for various scopes covered under this tender enquiry. Contract Duration shall be for Five (5) years with an optional extension of 2 years.

Bid Validity: Bid Offer should be valid for **180** calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:
ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

Note: Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) are advised to refer to the tender documentation and In-Country Value (ICV) Digital Portal: - <https://icv.qa/en-US/> for details of ICV compliance that may be applicable.

Passport service for falcons at Souq Waqif hospital

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change's Wildlife Development Department has announced that falcon documents (passports) are now available for collection at its Souq Waqif Falcon Hospital office. The initiative is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to improve public services, simplify falcon-related procedures, meet the needs of falcon owners, and enhance the quality of services for Qatar's falconry community. The ministry said the service is available during official working hours, from Sunday to Thursday, between 8am and 1pm. The initiative aims to improve service efficiency, streamline procedures, and provide convenient service channels while ensuring compliance with environmental regulations and legal requirements governing falcon-related transactions. Accordingly, the ministry stressed the importance of preserving falconry as an integral part of Qatar's cultural heritage and traditions, reaffirming its commitment to regulating falcon-related activities in accordance with applicable legislation and environmental requirements, balancing the preservation of this national heritage with the protection of wildlife and biodiversity.



INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender Reference	Description	Tender Fee	Tender Bond	Bid Closing Date
HBKU-RFQ-2377-2	Data Centre Infrastructure Maintenance & Support for HBKU	QAR 500	QAR 6,000	22 November 2026
HBKU-RFQ-2490	Supply, Installation, Training, and Commissioning of one Cloud Condensation Nuclei Counter	QAR 500	QAR 7,000	22 November 2026
HBKU-RFQ-2496	Provision of Laboratory Safety Specialist Services to QF-HBKU for 3 years with option to extend up to 1 year	QAR 2,000	QAR 100,000	03 December 2026

HBKU-University Procurement Service (UPS) is inviting companies to participate in the above-listed public tender. To receive the tender documents, please follow the following steps:

Supplier Registration: It is mandatory to be registered as a supplier with QF in order to participate in the above tender(s). Only QF-registered suppliers will be allowed to pay the tender fees online. Therefore, please visit QF website: <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration> to complete the Supplier Registration process.

Tender Fee: Interested bidders can sign in by visiting this link <https://Suppliers.qf.org.qa/abstract> and pay the respective non-refundable and non-transferrable tender fee online. All Tender Fees are to be paid using credit cards only.

Tender Fee Payment Dates: Payment of Tender Fee online will be from **21 October 2026 Until 04 November 2026**

- All bidders who are registered and have paid the required tender fees online to QF, will then be granted access to download the Tender Document.
- Technical and Commercial bids need to be submitted and attached online in QF Supplier portal as per the instructions provided in the "Supplier Portal" work instruction.
- The Commercial bid must be valid for **180 Days** from the Bid Closing Date.
- The Commercial bid must be accompanied by a Bank Guarantee (Tender Bond) issued by a local bank in Qatar and should be valid for **180 days** from the bid closing date (where applicable as per the Tender documents)
- The successful tenderer will be required to submit a Performance Bond as prescribed in each of the above tender documents.
- Qatar Foundation special qualifications, terms and conditions shall apply as stipulated in the tender document.

Note: All work instructions for Supplier registration and Supplier portal can be found in the link <https://www.qf.org.qa/supplier-registration>

HMC launches TMJ Arthroscopy service

QNA
Doha

Hamad Medical Corp (HMC) has announced the launch of the Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Arthroscopy service by the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery team at Aisha bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital, marking a significant step in advancing specialised surgical services and providing patients with innovative treatment options based on minimally invasive surgical techniques for the treatment of jaw joint disorders.

This service is the first of its kind in Qatar, enabling physicians to diagnose and treat several temporomandibular joint disorders using a precise small surgical camera inserted through very small incisions. This provides direct visualisation of the internal structures of the joint and supports highly precise therapeutic interventions while reducing the need for more complex open surgeries.

Dr Ibrahim Fawzy, Chief Executive Officer and Medical Director of Aisha bint Hamad Al Attiyah Hospital, emphasised that the introduction of this advanced service strengthens the hospital's position as a specialised centre for advanced surgical care and provides patients with access to modern treatment options locally, without the need to travel abroad.

In return, this has a positive impact on the quality of health-

care and the patient experience.

He added: "The launch of the Temporomandibular Joint Arthroscopy service is part of HMC's strategy to adopt medical innovations and provide advanced healthcare based on the latest technologies and specialised disciplines, contributing to improved treatment outcomes and an enhanced quality of life for patients."

Dr Khalid Abdul Jalil, Senior Consultant and Head of the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Department at HMC, said: "The launch of the Temporomandibular Joint Arthroscopy service represents a significant advancement in the treatment of jaw joint disorders in Qatar and reflects HMC's commitment to providing our patients with the latest internationally recognised treatment technologies. This technique combines diagnostic precision with therapeutic effectiveness through a minimally invasive surgical approach, helping to improve clinical outcomes and reduce recovery time."

Dr Khalid explained that Temporomandibular Joint Arthroscopy is an advanced surgical procedure that uses a small arthroscope equipped with a high-definition camera to examine the joint from inside and accurately assess its condition. He noted that this technique enables physicians to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the joint at the same time, including inflammation, internal adhesions, articular disc, limited jaw movement, and chronic joint pain.

UDST secures institutional accreditation from NCQAA

QNA
Doha

The Qatar's National Committee for Qualifications and Academic Accreditation (NCQAA) has granted institutional accreditation to the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST), making it the first university in the country to receive this accreditation.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Chairman of the Committee, Dr Mazen Omar Hasna, said the accreditation is awarded upon meeting five criteria established by the Committee to promote the quality of Qatar's higher education sector.

These criteria cover the institution's mission and organisation, integrity assurance, the availability of institutional resources, planning and institutional effectiveness, fulfilment of the institution's mission, and its impact on the surrounding community, Dr Hasna highlighted.

He emphasised that this feat demonstrates the effectiveness of UDST's practices and strengthens its standing and the recognition of its qualifications both domestically and internationally.

Dr Hasna presented an overview of the various accreditation phases, along with the Committee's recommendations following the granting of accreditation, congratulating UDST on receiving the award. He further highlighted the



University's efforts, which culminated in the decision to grant this accreditation.

He revealed that nearly 14 universities nationwide are engaged in the institutional accreditation process, with seven having been visited and the other seven conducting self-studies throughout this year and next year.

President of UDST Dr Salem bin Nasser Al-Naemi expressed pride in UDST's achievement in receiving this accreditation, which, he said, reflects the university's stalwartness and sense of responsibility, illuminates the path forward, and demonstrates that distinction knows no boundaries but extends toward an infinite horizon.

Dr Al-Naemi noted that this accreditation is a testament to the university's clear mission, robust

governance, and deeply rooted integrity, emphasising that its resources are as substantial as its ambitions, its planning is as deliberate as its mission demands, and its performance is measured with transparency and accountability.

The university, he asserted, fulfils its commitments to students and the wider community while making a substantive impact that extends well beyond the campus. Dr Al-Naemi continued, stressing that this accomplishment carries particular significance for UDST's students and graduates, conveying a clear message that their qualifications now command greater recognition and distinctive value.

For the university's partners in the labour market, it signals that the talent the institution develops is

cultivated in accordance with top-flight standards, the official said. At the national level, the achievement marks another step toward Qatar National Vision 2030, which places people at the core of development and positions knowledge as the fulcrum of the future.

Applied education has taught us that knowledge remains incomplete unless it is translated into action, and ideas aren't judged by their beauty, but by their impact, Dr Al-Naemi remarked, adding that this approach views the accreditation as a launching pad and a promise that the university has made to remain steadfast in carrying out its educational mission and persistently promoting distinction in this field of education.

Dr Al-Naemi noted that this achievement grew out of the combined efforts and dedication of all members of society. He thanked everyone who had contributed to achieving this feat.

Established in 2022, the NCQAA is responsible for overseeing and updating the National Qualifications Framework in line with the State's general policies.

It also accredits the qualifications – certificates and academic degrees – awarded by higher education institutions in Qatar to ensure their alignment with this framework and the application of quality assurance standards. Compliance is further strengthened through the academic accreditation system standards established by the Committee.

Spanish Interior Minister: International co-operation is essential to safeguarding global security

Minister of the Interior of Spain, Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gomez, underscored the importance of international co-operation, mutual trust and information sharing in safeguarding global security, stressing the need to strengthen collaboration among security institutions, law enforcement agencies and international organisations as security threats become increasingly interconnected and evolve.

Speaking on the first day of the Global Security Forum in Doha, Grande-Marlaska said the forum had established itself as a lead-

ing platform for dialogue among policymakers, experts and professionals in the fields of security and defence worldwide. He noted that this year's theme, "The Future of Alliances," was particularly timely given the current international landscape.

He said today's security environment was characterised by growing overlap among threats, including terrorism, organised crime, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and hybrid threats. These challenges could no longer be addressed in isolation and required integrated,

co-ordinated responses.

Regional conflicts, humanitarian crises, population displacement and economic pressures also contributed to instability and created vulnerabilities that criminal and extremist groups could exploit, he said, adding that no country could confront the challenges of the 21st century alone.

The Spanish interior minister called for international co-operation to extend beyond alliances rooted in traditional political and military partnerships to encompass operational collaboration among security institutions, law

enforcement agencies and relevant stakeholders.

He stressed the need to strengthen security institutions' capacity to anticipate risks, innovate and adapt, particularly as threats evolve and malicious actors exploit emerging technologies and vulnerabilities.

The minister said Spain had acquired extensive experience in international police co-operation, combating terrorism and organised crime, integrated border management and securing major international events. He emphasised that security increas-

ingly depended on anticipating risks, reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening communities' resilience.

He also highlighted the role of technology in enhancing prevention, analysis and investigative capabilities, while stressing the need to address the vulnerabilities that technology could create.

The minister underscored the importance of co-operation between Europe and the Gulf states in maintaining stability, combating extremism, strengthening resilience against hybrid threats and ensuring citizens' security. He

said Spain valued Qatar and the growing co-operation between the security institutions of the two countries.

Concluding his remarks, Minister of the Interior of Spain, Fernando Grande-Marlaska Gomez, said the future of alliances would depend on the ability to address shared threats.

He reaffirmed Spain's commitment to international co-operation and to strengthening ties among Europe, the Mediterranean and the Gulf, emphasising that security in the 21st century is a shared responsibility. (QNA)

MoPH trains school nurses under the asthma-friendly schools programme

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) recently organised a workshop under the Asthma-Friendly Schools Programme in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and the Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC). Approximately 117 PHCC school health nurses working in government schools attended the workshop.

The workshop is part of MoPH's efforts to implement the National Chronic Respiratory Diseases Plan 2025-2030, which emphasises asthma prevention and care for people living with asthma across all settings, including schools.

The workshop aims to strengthen the capacities of healthcare and educational professionals to support students with asthma, promote early symptom identification and appropriate management of asthma attacks, reduce complications and emergency department visits, raise awareness among students and parents, and standardise asthma management procedures in schools.

These efforts help create a safe, supportive school environment that enables students with asthma to learn and fully participate in a wide range of activities without limitation.

The workshop, delivered by specialists and experts from the



MoPH, HMC, and the PHCC, covered key topics, including the fundamentals of childhood asthma, asthma symptoms and triggers, and appropriate response measures in school settings.

It also addressed proper inhaler use, peak expiratory flow measurement, the importance of adhering to treatment plans, and strengthening communication and coordination among schools, families, and healthcare providers.

Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, director of the Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention Programmes Department at the MoPH, said: "The Asthma-Friendly Schools Programme represents a successful model of collaboration between the health

and education sectors. The programme helps to raise awareness among school staff and to equip them to respond effectively to the needs of students with asthma, thereby supporting their safety and enabling their full participation in school activities."

Experts highlighted the importance of strengthening healthcare support for students with asthma by enhancing school health nurses' competencies, developing staff skills in early identification and appropriate symptom management, and fostering stronger partnerships among families, schools, and healthcare providers.

They also emphasised the pivotal role of school health nurses in ongoing monitoring, health educa-

tion, early intervention, and documenting care through the electronic health record system, all of which help create a safe, supportive school environment and improve students' health and quality of life.

MoPH emphasises the importance of ongoing collaboration among healthcare providers, educational institutions, and families to strengthen asthma awareness and ensure students with asthma receive appropriate care throughout the school day.

The Ministry also urges parents to notify the school nurse if their child has asthma, provide a treatment plan approved by the treating physician, and ensure that the necessary inhalers are available at school.

Visit Qatar to showcase Qatar's tourism offering at WTM London 2026

QNA
Doha

Visit Qatar will participate in World Travel Market (WTM) London 2026, taking place from Nov 3-5 at ExCeL London, marking its 12th consecutive year at the event since 2014.

In a statement yesterday, Visit Qatar said that WTM London provides a platform to engage with global travel trade professionals, buyers and media, strengthen industry partnerships and promote Qatar's tourism offering across key international markets.

This year, Visit Qatar will lead a delegation of 40 partners, including hotels, resorts, destination management companies and tourism organisations. The delegation will be based at the Qatar Pavilion, Stand S8-210, with Hayya Platform and Qatar Calendar also represented, each showcasing its respective offering.

The Qatar Pavilion will showcase the country's cultural heritage, attractions, events and visitor experiences, while providing opportunities for international

partners to connect and explore potential collaborations.

Visitors can explore an Immersive Room featuring Qatar's landmarks, landscapes and cultural experiences, a Photo Booth highlighting the country's landmarks, and the Qatar F1 Experience introducing visitors to motorsport in Qatar.

Cultural activities will include traditional sword craftsmanship, Arabic calligraphy and an introduction to Qatar's pearl-diving heritage, alongside traditional hospitality featuring dates, date ice cream, Arabic sweets and Arabic coffee.

During the exhibition, Qatar Calendar will highlight upcoming events, including the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026, MotoGP, Doha Marathon, Art Basel Qatar and the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027, alongside concerts, festivals and culinary experiences such as the Qatar International Food Festival.

Through its participation, Visit Qatar reaffirms its commitment to positioning Qatar as a leading global destination, promoting its diverse attractions, exceptional hospitality, and vibrant cultural identity to international audiences.

GU-Q convenes workshop on energy, maritime security in Athens

Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) recently convened a one-day workshop, Energy and Maritime Security in the Contemporary Mediterranean and Beyond, at the Saint George Lycabettus in Athens, bringing together leading scholars, policymakers, and industry experts from across the Mediterranean, the Gulf, Europe, and the United States.

Against a backdrop of offshore gas discoveries, an accelerating energy transition, and renewed

great-power competition in the region's waters, the workshop examined energy and maritime security as a single, increasingly interconnected challenge. Dr Clyde Wilcox, acting dean of GU-Q, opened the programme, which the university's Energy Studies Programme organised.

Discussions focused on four panels: the contested reordering of the Eastern Mediterranean; the agency of small maritime powers and lessons for the Eastern Mediterranean; the supply chains and

critical infrastructure underpinning the energy transition; and the human capital, education, and skills required to sustain it.

Speakers were drawn from institutions including Qatar University, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, King's College London, the University of East London, Texas A&M University at Qatar, the MIT Centre for Energy and Environmental Policy Research, the National Technical University of Athens, NCSR "Demokritos" and the Hellenic

Electricity Distribution Network Operator, alongside senior figures from the maritime and energy industries.

"In a time of insecurity, instability and disorder, it is vital to consider how energy and maritime security are playing out in key regions like the Mediterranean and to learn the lessons of other regions on these matters," said Prof Rory Miller, director of the Energy Studies Programme and the Small States Research Programme at GU-Q.

"The Mediterranean has become a place where energy, security and sustainability can no longer be treated as separate questions," said Dr Valentini Pappa, programme director of New Academic Initiatives at GU-Q and the workshop's organiser. "By bringing scholars, policymakers and industry leaders to the same table, we wanted to examine these challenges as the single, interconnected story they have become – and to keep the human dimension, the people and skills behind

the transition, at the centre of the conversation."

The workshop was attended by a distinguished group of guests, including the first secretary Alanoud Ahmad al-Mohammadi of Qatar to the Hellenic Republic, Ret Adm Stelios Fenekos, president of the Alexander Papanastasiou Scientific Institute, and senior representatives of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, the Public Power Corporation and The American College of Greece.



QM names Nwagbogu director of Tasweer '27

Qatar Museums (QM) has appointed celebrated Nigerian curator Azu Nwagbogu as the artistic director of Tasweer 2027, the fourth edition of QM's photography biennial and the first to be presented under QM's future Art Mill Museum.

Known for his work organising exhibitions and publishing texts that focus on decolonisation, restitution, and repatriation, the internationally recognised Nwagbogu is a founder of the Lagos-Photo Biennale and the founder and director of the African Artists' Foundation (AAF), a non-profit art space in Lagos that promotes contemporary African art, social justice, and cultural dialogue.

Catherine Grenier, director of Concept of Art Mill Museum, said: "We welcome Azu Nwagbogu as artistic director of the fourth edition of Tasweer, Qatar Museums' photography biennial, opening in April 2027. Following three editions conceived by Charlotte Cotton in 2021 and 2023 and Meriem Berrada in 2025, we look forward to this new important collaboration. Azu Nwagbogu's remarkable international experience, network and vision will undoubtedly shape a fascinating and engaging fourth edition."

Khalifa al-Obaidly, director of Tasweer 2027, said: "It is a great pleasure to welcome Azu Nwagbogu as the artistic director of Tasweer 2027, the biennial's fourth edition. His unique perspective on photography, which is rooted in his deep connections in the Global South, and notably in Africa, on an international scale, make him uniquely well suited to organise an event that celebrates photographers and visual storytellers from across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. We look forward to seeing his vision."



Azu Nwagbogu **PHOTO:** Pardis Faqiri

Nwagbogu said: "I am honoured to take on the role of artistic director of Tasweer 2027, and am deeply grateful for the vision, care, and contributions of the previous artistic directors, whose work has established such a strong foundation for the biennial. Images have always shaped our perception of the world; what is new is the speed and scale of their circulation, and the new ways they ask us to look, remember, and interpret. Tasweer creates an important space to engage and host that changing visual language with ethical and intellectual courage."

Nwagbogu's curatorial work has been presented internationally, including at the Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels, Rencontres d'Arles, PhotoEspaña in Madrid and at the 60th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, where he curated the inaugural Benin Pavilion in 2024. As a Curator at Large for Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town, Nwagbogu created Dig Where You Stand, a travelling contemporary art exhibition engaging migration, cultural heritage, restitution, and collective memory.

In 2026, he was honoured with an Art Basel Award recognising his role as among the most forward-thinking cultural workers shaping art and cultural production today. In 2021, he was named Curator of the Year by the Royal Photographic Society.

Tasweer, which the future Art Mill Museum oversees, is a leading platform for photography and visual culture in Qatar and the wider region, connecting photographers, artists, curators, and audiences from the Middle East and beyond.

Since its launch in 2021, the festival has brought established and emerging practitioners together to present their work, exchange ideas, and engage with how photography continues to evolve.

The fourth edition will build on this to expand Tasweer's connections across the region and internationally.

Further details about Tasweer 2027, including its artistic programme and participating artists, will be announced in the lead-up to the fourth edition, which will open in April 2027 and run until June 2027.

Qatar participates in meeting of GCC ministers of Islamic affairs in Bahrain

Qatar participated yesterday in the 12th meeting of GCC ministers responsible for Islamic affairs and endowments in Bahrain under the leadership of HE Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs Ghanem bin Shaheen bin Ghanem al-Ghanem.

Opening the meeting, HE Bahrain's Minister of Justice, Islamic Affairs and Endowments Nawaf bin Mohammed al-Maawda said joint GCC meetings reflect the directives of the GCC leaders to strengthen unity, integration and closer ties among member states.

He noted that the past ministerial meetings had achieved significant progress in co-operation, co-ordination and the exchange of expertise, reinforcing GCC integration and the Council's role in serving the Islamic world.

The ministers discussed ways to enhance co-operation through exchanging research, expertise



and best practices in endowments and Islamic affairs, improving institutional knowledge-sharing and strengthening the effectiveness and social impact of religious outreach and guidance initiatives. The agenda included a proposed GCC Endowments Week to highlight the developmental and civilisational role of endowments.

The ministers also discussed

establishing a national indicator to measure the social impact of endowments. Other topics included a proposed architectural identity for mosque minarets that balances authenticity with innovation. The participants also reviewed proposals on cultural dialogue between the East and the West, establishing a GCC scientific observatory, and addressing extremist ideas.

QC provides safe drinking water to 30,000 people in Bangladesh

Qatar Charity, through its Bangladesh office, has installed 750 deep tube wells, improving access to safe drinking water for approximately 30,000 people with support from benefactors in Qatar.

Implemented between January and August 2026, the projects form part of Qatar Charity's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) interventions. They prioritised vulnerable communities, particularly in coastal areas where salinity and water contamination pose significant challenges.

The projects covered 12 districts: Khulna, Bagerhat, Bhola, Jessore, Jhenaidah, Lakshmipur, Patuakhali, Barguna, Barisal, Madaripur, Satkhira and Chandpur. Access to safe drinking water remains a challenge for many communities in Bangladesh because of saltwater intrusion, contaminated sources and limited access to suitable water facilities.

By bringing water closer to homes, the wells help reduce the burden of collecting it from distant sources, ease daily responsibilities for women and children, and support healthier living conditions.



For families in affected areas, a reliable source of drinking water can make a meaningful difference to everyday life.

Babul Sardar, a beneficiary from Bagerhat, welcomed the initiative and highlighted its importance for the family. "Access to safe drinking water is essential for every family. A deep tube well in our community has made daily life easier and given us greater peace of mind about the water we use for drinking and household needs. We are grateful to Qatar Charity and its benefactors in Qatar for supporting our community."

Abul Kalam, a beneficiary from Bhola, said: "This initiative has

made access to drinking water easier for all families living in our area. We sincerely appreciate Qatar Charity's support."

Golam Md Baten, a government official from Bagerhat district, highlighted the importance of initiatives that improve access to safe drinking water in vulnerable communities. "Access to safe drinking water is essential for public health and community well-being. Such initiatives help address local water challenges and bring practical benefits to people who need support. Qatar Charity's contribution is valuable, particularly for communities facing difficulties accessing suitable drinking water sources."

Ministry of Justice pushes to enhance government legal professionals' skills

The Ministry of Justice, through the Legal and Judicial Studies Centre, is organising three specialised training programmes for researchers and legal professionals across ministries and government agencies.

The programmes are part of the centre's training plan, which aims to build national legal capacity and improve the efficiency of legal practice across institutions. The initiative reflects the ministry's efforts to invest in human resources and prepare legal professionals to keep pace with legislative and judicial developments by equipping them with the knowledge and practical skills needed to perform their duties efficiently and accurately.

The training programmes include "Skills in Appealing Civil and Commercial Judgments," the Legal and Judicial Sciences Programme for Assistant Judges, launched in cooperation with the Supreme Judicial Council, and "Provisions Regulating Expert Work under Qatari Law," which prepares participants for the licensing of the 40th cohort of experts. It aims to strengthen participants' professional skills and their ability to present persuasive legal arguments before courts. They also focus on analysing judicial rulings, distinguishing between formal and substantive errors and defects, de-



veloping legal defences, organising grounds for appeal and ensuring accurate legal drafting. Practical training will cover preparing appeal statements, petitions for reconsideration and cassation appeals, and the oversight measures stipulated in Qatari legislation.

The programmes are expected to enable participants to prepare comprehensive defence and appeal memoranda with sound legal structure, reasoning and arguments. They will also help participants analyse legal texts and judicial rulings and avoid common legal-drafting errors.

Dr Abdullah Hamad al-Khalidi, director of the Legal and Judicial Studies Centre at the Ministry of Justice, said the programmes reflect the ministry's commitment to developing the legal training

system and building national expertise equipped with the legislative knowledge and practical skills needed to improve legal work across government agencies. He noted that the centre seeks to ensure its training programmes address the practical needs of legal professionals in government institutions by combining legal foundations with professional application. This approach enables participants to apply legislation correctly and handle legal cases and workplace risks effectively.

Al-Khalidi added that investment in the professional development of legal personnel is a key pillar of the Ministry of Justice's 2025-2030 strategic plan, supporting efforts to improve government institutional efficiency and reinforce the rule of law.

Ministry of Justice organises workshop on cancer prevention

In collaboration with the Qatar Cancer Society, the Ministry of Justice organised an awareness workshop recently on cancer prevention and the importance of early detection. The event coincided with Breast Cancer Awareness Month and reflects the Ministry's commitment to enhancing health awareness among its female staff and fostering preventive practices within the workplace.

The workshop aimed to raise awareness about cancer prevention factors and highlight the critical role of early detection in improving treatment outcomes. It also aimed to promote a culture of health by encouraging staff to adopt preventive behaviours and undergo regular medical screenings. The workshop covered key topics, including cancer signs and symptoms, prevention strategies, risk reduction, and the importance of early detection. It also provided nutritional advice to help lower cancer risk and addressed common myths and facts about mental and behavioural health. These efforts aimed to enhance health literacy and empower female employees to take practical steps to maintain their well-being. The session featured interactive health-awareness activities, including an educational quiz and prize giveaways for attendees.

This workshop is part of the Ministry of Justice's community-focused programs and its institutional collaboration with national organisations to implement awareness initiatives. It underscores the Ministry's dedication to programs that support employees' health and safety and foster a work environment that encourages healthy lifestyles.

Qatar's winter concert line-up to bring Arab icons and global stars to Doha

Qatar is set to welcome a diverse line-up of Arabic, regional and international artists, with live concerts taking place across Doha from October 22 to December 17.

The programme brings established Arab artists, contemporary regional talent, and internationally acclaimed performers to venues across the city, offering visitors and residents a varied live music programme throughout the winter season.

The winter concert programme will feature some of the region's most recognised artists.

Marilyne Naaman will perform tomorrow (October 22) at Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC)'s Al Mayassa Theatre.

On November 12, Lebanese singer Fadel Chaker will take the stage with his son Mohamed Chaker at the iconic Katara Amphitheatre.

Qatar's winter entertainment line-up also reaches beyond the region, with an internationally acclaimed artist set to perform in Doha.

On November 6, Oscar and Grammy Award-winning composer Hans Zimmer brings his live tour to 974 Stadium.

Celebrated for scoring some of the world's best-known films, Zimmer will perform alongside a 19-piece band.

As the year draws to a close, the spotlight turns to a new generation of artists contributing to the region's evolving music scene.

On November 20, Alexandria-born rapper and vocalist Wegz will bring an energetic night to 900 Park, ideal for fans of the region's thriving rap scene.

On December 11, Saint Levant will perform at the same venue with his Afandi World Tour, bringing together cultures through live music.

The winter concert programme concludes on December 17, when Egyptian alternative band Cairokee takes the stage at the QNCC as part of its "SuperNova Album Tour", marking the band's Doha debut.

With more than 560 events throughout the year, Qatar Calendar provides a central platform for discovering Qatar's diverse entertainment, cultural, and sporting experiences.

From international concerts and major events to family-friendly activities, the calendar offers visitors and residents a convenient way to discover what is happening across Qatar.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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QID No. 28705015218**

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652 CCQ students graduate on second day

QNA
Doha

Community College of Qatar has celebrated the graduation of 652 students on the second day of its 2026 ceremonies, as the institution marks its largest graduating class in its history, with a total of 1,162 graduates.

The ceremony recognized 565 recipients of associate diplomas and 87 graduates of the Higher Education Certificate in Early Childhood Education programme. HE Minister of Education and Higher Education Lolwah al-Khater attended as guest of honour. Outstanding students were also recognised for their academic achievements. In his opening address, college president Dr Khalid al-Horr stressed the importance of continuity in education, highlighting pathways that allow students to progress from certificates to diplomas and bachelor's degrees.

He said the approach supported



lifelong learning and is aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, which places human development at the heart of the country's long-term goals. Many associate diploma graduates are already continuing their studies in bachelor's degree programmes at the college, al-Horr said, adding that the qualification should serve as a foundation for further education rather than a limit to students' ambitions.

He also highlighted graduates who had returned to education after years away from the classroom while balancing employment and family responsibilities. The Early Childhood Education programme was developed in strategic partner-

ship with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to prepare qualified Qatari professionals for the early years of schooling.

Graduate Dalal al-Shammari, speaking on behalf of her fellow students, said success involved not only achieving goals but also gaining experience and values along the way. She said graduates had overcome the challenges of balancing work, family and study, and remained committed to further academic and professional development.

The ceremony also featured accounts from graduates who had returned to education to improve their career prospects.

Houthi attacks undermine Saudi economic ambitions

AFP
Riyadh

With airports closed and the capital brought to an effective standstill, attacks by Yemen's Houthis on Saudi Arabia have thrown a wrench in the kingdom's ambitious plans to overhaul the economy and draw foreign investment. A decade ago, de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman launched his bold Vision 2030, aiming to diversify the economy away from oil and turn the powerful monarchy into a hub for tourism, international events and multinational enterprises. Already dealt a blow by Iran's attacks on US allies in the Gulf during the wider Middle East war, the plan now faces an existential hurdle with unprecedented Houthi attacks, in particular targeting oil infrastructure and airports. "I can't think of another time when the challenge facing MBS was more," said HA Hellyer, an analyst at the Royal

United Services Institute (RUSI). "He's dealing with the Iranians on one side of the country which is very difficult and problematic and then he's dealing with the Houthis who aligned with the Iranians on the other." On October 10, a Houthi attack on Riyadh's international airport killed 13 people and injured more than 300 – the deadliest in the kingdom in over a decade, with the airport remaining closed since. A consultant to the Saudi government who wished to remain anonymous meanwhile told AFP that "the deeper risk there is that, you know, boards start pricing Saudi as part of an active conflict zone. "If that perception settles into risk models, insurance premiums, it will take many years to unwind," she added. A number of major events have been cancelled, most notably the Future Investment Initiative (FII), nicknamed "Davos on the desert" – a bulwark of the kingdom's diversification drive. The uncertainty has only piled pressure on the 41-year-old crown prince's Vision

2030, as several of its megaprojects – most notably the hyper-futuristic megacity dubbed Neom – have been scaled back. In Riyadh, the iconic Kingdom Centre recently ordered its office tenants, which include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to work remotely until further notice. The world's largest crude oil exporter is moreover expected to see its economy contract by 3.3 %, according to the IMF's latest projections, revised from a projected growth of 1.7 % in July. The kingdom is grappling with a new reality wherein US protection is no longer guaranteed, as President Donald Trump has appeared reluctant to offer support in Yemen as he gears up for mid-term elections. "Saudi Arabia finds itself in a delicate situation in the face of Houthi attacks, as well as US hesitation," said Laurent Bonnefoy, a researcher at Ceri/Sciences Po in Paris. "Trump for the time being seems to be refusing to commit to offering the need-

ed military backing," he added. Riyadh has secured support from several allies including France, Britain, Türkiye and Pakistan to help mitigate the threat posed by the Houthis," said Torbjorn Soltvedt, Middle East analyst at Verisk Maplecroft. "But all are reluctant to go beyond defensive measures, with no appetite to put troops on the ground in Yemen." The Houthis for their part are relying on a vast arsenal of weapons built up over years with Iranian support. Following an uneasy four-year truce in the war, fighting kicked off again in July when the airport in Sanaa was struck after Iran sent a plane in defiance of Saudi control – an attack the Houthis blamed on Saudi Arabia. The Yemeni group has a large number of longer-range missiles and drones at its disposal, and has seized control of the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which leads up to the Suez Canal. After pursuing a policy of "power and regional projection" in 2019, Riyadh –

facing a "stalemate" in Yemen – shifted tack around 2019 and focused on economic objectives, Bonnefoy said. Ali Shihabi, a Saudi analyst close to the Saudi government, said the kingdom "has faced repeated challenges over the decades". "The Kingdom has weathered each crisis and will weather this one. It is resilient, has staying power and can draw on global supply chains and an extensive network of alliances," he said. "The Houthis, ultimately, have only Iran, and Iran itself is under severe strain." But Soltvedt suggested the risks predate the latest conflict, saying: "Allaying investor concerns over geopolitical risk has been a longstanding challenge for Riyadh, from the attacks on the heart of Saudi Arabia's energy sector just before the Aramco IPO in 2019, to the outbreak of regional conflict this year. "With no solution to the conflict in sight, the drone and missile threat from multiple directions and actors will continue to weigh on the minds of investors."

We won't move enriched uranium out of country, says Iran's security chief

Agencies
Tehran/Cairo

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian discussed mediation efforts and regional developments during a meeting with Pakistan's army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Tehran yesterday. While, Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei yesterday told Munir that Tehran will not allow nuclear material to leave the country, Iranian media reported. Pakistan is a key mediator between the US and Iran. Its earlier mediation efforts with both parties resulted in an interim peace agreement signed in June. But the Islamabad Memorandum quickly faltered, amid new fighting between Iran and the US weeks after. Pakistani army chief during his visit also met Iranian parliament

speaker Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf. The Iranian official said Washington can't earn Tehran's trust until it fulfills the seven conditions presented by Iran for reopening of the Strait of Hormuz last month, according to an Iranian readout of the meeting. Iran's conditions include, among other demands, the lifting of the US blockade on its ports, the lifting of US sanctions on its oil exports as well as ending hostilities on all regional fronts. "Not even a tiny bit of enriched nuclear material will leave Iran. Such materials constitute a major asset and national wealth for the Iranian people, intended for use within the country," said Rezaei, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. "There will be no negotiations until America takes steps to build trust – a process that must begin with the fulfilment of Iran's conditions."

Underprivileged students in Syria receive school bags via QRCS campaign

As part of its Back-to-School Make Students Happy 2026 campaign, the Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) representation office in Syria has launched the Student Bags project, a programme designed to support education for children in vulnerable environments. Implemented in co-ordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARCS), the project distributes school bags to poor students in several governorates to help them continue their education and ease the financial burden of securing essential school supplies. Distributions began in the Houla region of Homs, as part of a plan to distribute around 8,200 school bags. So far, nearly 3,500 have been handed out, with efforts underway to reach the distribution target soon. Each bag contains a variety of school supplies, including notebooks, pens, stationery, and other items students need to study well and attend school normally. QRCS revealed plans to expand distributions later to the towns of southern Al-Hasakah and northern Deir Al-Zor, adding 8,200 school bags to reach more students. The Back-to-School 2026 fundraising campaign aims to help students pursue their education by providing educational supplies and opportunities that enable them to build a better future. The scheme supports education services in many countries, costing more than QR12mn. These initiatives include support for low-income students, school bags and stationery, school maintenance



and furnishing, and scholarships for certain university majors. In addition to Qatar, the education-focused interventions will cover eight other countries: Palestine (Gaza), Jordan, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Niger. The campaign will reach more than 24,000 students, as detailed in the campaign's brochure and online (<https://qrqs.qa/BSC2>). The public can also find more details and donate to the campaign via QRCS's mobile app, donor service (66666364), home donation collection (33998898), or donation collection agents/desks at malls and shopping centres.



UN demands aid access to besieged Yemen city Taiz

AFP
Geneva

The UN insisted yesterday that aid must immediately be allowed to enter Yemen's Taiz, besieged by pro-Iran Houthi fighters who are preventing supplies from reaching the country's third-largest city. Houthi fighters have encircled Taiz since early October, blocking the road that links it to Aden, interim capital of the Saudi-backed, internationally-recognised government. "Humanitarian aid must be immediately allowed to enter the city and its passage must be facilitated," UN human rights chief Volker Turk said in a statement. He said that relief must reach the city to avert a rights catastrophe. "The Houthis' closure of the only supply route linking Taiz to Aden is placing civilians at grave risk, blocking humanitarian aid and cutting off essential supplies," said Turk. The Houthis, from Yemen's rugged north, seized the capital Sanaa in 2014, sparking a brutal civil war with a Saudi-led coalition fighting for the government. The civil war reignited in July, months into the US-Iran conflict that has plunged the Middle East into crisis. Turk said the encirclement of Taiz had sent the prices of commodities soaring, leaving many without food or other basic necessities. His office has also noted restrictions on safe access to water and essential goods, exacerbat-

ing humanitarian needs and increasing risks for civilians. "Civilians wishing to leave must be allowed to do so freely and safely," said Turk, the UN high commissioner for human rights. Turk's office said it had verified that 32 civilians had been killed across Taiz governorate between August 1 and October 19, including nine women and 14 children. Meanwhile 115 civilians were injured, among them 34 women and 36 children. Turk warned that with fighting moving closer to densely populated areas of the city, the risk of death and injury to civilians would only increase. "I urge all parties to the conflict to refrain from the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas and to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects," he said. The World Health Organisation said that Taiz's health system was now at "critical risk". "Fighting and road closures are threatening hospitals' access to fuel, oxygen, medicines and essential supplies, putting patients requiring life-saving care at immediate risk," WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told a press conference. The UN health agency is calling for the safe movement of patients, health workers, ambulances, fuel, oxygen and medicines to the city. Jasarevic said 12 hospitals in Taiz had around four days of fuel left, while there are stocks of one week or less for 115 out of 127 essential medicines. He said the health crisis across

UN says more than 250,000 people displaced in Yemen

AFP
Geneva

More than 250,000 people have been internally displaced in Yemen since the civil war reignited, the UN said yesterday. Yemen's civil war – in which a Saudi-led military coalition supports the government against the Iran-backed Houthis – reignited in July, months into the US-Iran conflict that has plunged the Middle East into crisis. After an uneasy, four-year truce, Yemen's conflict has surged back to life and has been intensifying since the Houthis seized from Yemeni government strategic territory along the Red Sea coast last month. Displacement is continuing to rise sharply across Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries, which was already suffering a vast humanitarian crisis. "UNHCR is obviously deeply concerned about the escalating displacement situation," Matthew Saltmarsh, spokesman for the UN refugee agency, told a

press conference in Geneva. "The numbers displaced have now reached over 250,000. "These are people who have been internally displaced in Yemen between August 1 and October 17". Around half of those newly displaced are being hosted in Taiz, Yemen's third largest city. Houthi fighters have encircled Taiz since early October, blocking the road that links it to Aden, interim capital of the Saudi-backed, internationally-recognised government. "The most immediate needs that we've been able to identify are around shelter, food, and multi-purpose cash assistance, said Saltmarsh. The spokesman noted that as of Saturday, some 3,836 new arrivals had been recorded in Djibouti, and a further 242 in Somalia, including both refugees and returnees. Following the capsizing of a boat travelling from Djibouti to Yemen on the night of October 8-9, 139 bodies have been recovered, including 109 who have been identified, he said. Meanwhile 82 survivors have been identified and were receiving support.

Yemen was escalating rapidly, with rising disease outbreaks placing "immense pressure on an already overstretched health system". Across Yemen, suspected cholera cases have tripled from 221 in the week ending September 12 to 683 in the week ending October 10.

Death toll from Houthi strike on Yemen govt camp rises to 73

Local Yemeni authorities yesterday raised the death toll from a Houthi strike a day earlier on a military camp belonging to government forces to 73, as fighting between the foes escalates. It marked the deadliest attack in weeks as fighting between the Iran-backed Houthis and Yemen's internationally recognised, Saudi-supported government rages after the collapse of a years-long truce. The death toll from Monday's strike on the camp in the energy-rich Shabwa province "increased to 73 martyrs, while search and

follow-up efforts are ongoing to discover the fate of 14 missing people", provincial authorities said in a statement. Local authorities had put the death toll at 53, adding that more than 200 others were injured, all new members of the internal security forces. Majed al-Nuzaili, spokesperson for the Yemeni armed forces, stated Monday on X that the Houthis targeted Shabwa with three ballistic missiles, and that the attack "struck a training center for personnel of security and police agencies."

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree later confirmed that the group was responsible for the attack, saying it targeted "gatherings in Al-Alam camp, which is run by a Saudi officer from the eastern regions". Shabwa contains major oil and gas fields and is home to the Balhaf liquefied natural gas terminal, the country's largest energy facility. A source said the army feared the strikes could pave the way for a ground offensive "similar to what happened in Mokha", the strategic Red Sea port city seized by the Houthis. (AFP)

Israeli fire kills four people in Gaza, medics say

Reuters
Cairo

Israeli strikes and gunfire killed at least four Palestinians, including a married couple and a 17-year-old, in separate incidents in the Gaza Strip yesterday, health officials said. Medics said an Israeli airstrike killed Akram Yassin and his wife Dina Abu Baker in an apartment in Gaza City. The Israeli military said it struck a militant in the area, without giving further details. In Khan Younis, in the south, medics said a 17-year-old boy was killed by Israeli gunfire near the Qizan Al-Najar neighbourhood, while another was killed by Israeli gunfire in the Zeitoun suburb east of Gaza City, taking yesterday's death toll to at least four. The Israeli military did not immediately comment on either of the two incidents. Palestinians inspected the aftermath of the strike on the apartment in Gaza City before gathering for the couple's funeral. "We're supposed to be in a ceasefire period, but honestly, we are not seeing a ceasefire or anything. The war is still going on, assassinations are continuing, and the shelling has not stopped,"



Tents sheltering people displaced by war are pictured between the rubble of destroyed buildings in the Jabalia camp in Gaza. (AFP)

said Mahmoud Yassin, whose brother was killed. Israel, which says Hamas has been rearming and launching attacks in violation of the ceasefire, has stepped up strikes on the group in recent weeks. Hamas has denied trying to carry out attacks or rebuild its arsenal and accuses Israel of undermining the Gaza peace deal. The ceasefire, brokered by the United States

a year ago, calls for the eventual reconstruction of the territory. But little progress has been made towards implementing a deal to end the conflict that includes terms for Hamas to disarm and Israel to withdraw its troops. Gaza health officials have said at least 1,500 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the ceasefire. Israel says four soldiers have been killed in Gaza over the same period.

Lula corners Bolsonaro over wealth, Meta ploy

Agencies
Brasilia/Sao Paulo

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva yesterday pledged to disclose his bank, tax and telephone records as long as his right-wing challenger Flavio Bolsonaro did the same, seeking to gain the upper hand as both grapple with graft allegations.

In a document submitted to Brazil's electoral court, Lula said he would authorise the release of his own bank, tax and telephone records, as well as those of his family members, if Flavio followed suit. The challenge extends to legal entities in which the two candidates are partners or directors, as well as entities whose bank accounts they are authorised to manage.

"The public disclosure of the banking, tax and telephone records of both candidates before next Wednesday is essential to ensure that the Brazilian people are properly informed and able to decide freely who they will vote for," the document said.

Flavio Bolsonaro is under investigation over alleged corruption and money laundering linked to the country's biggest-ever banking fraud with the now-defunct lender Banco Master. The probe focuses on an investment he allegedly sought from Daniel Vercaro, the bank's owner, to help finance a film about his father.

The senator has acknowledged seeking funding but denies any wrongdoing. He is also under investigation in a separate probe over



A man walks past campaign towels depicting Lula sold on the streets in Brasilia, ahead of the runoff presidential election. (Reuters)

alleged money laundering.

Brazil's Supreme Court has authorised an investigation into Fabio Luis Lula da Silva, one of Lula's sons, over alleged influence peddling and corruption tied to Health Ministry dealings, as well as a separate pension-fraud probe. Lula's son denies the allegations and the president has said his son would be treated like any other citizen.

"I'm willing to let Brazilians see who the thieves and corrupt people in this country really are. I want to see whether he (Bolsonaro) has the courage to disclose his bank and phone records," Lula said during a campaign event in Maranhao state.

The move was not intended to prove the president's innocence but to demonstrate that "those with nothing to hide have nothing to fear," according to Lula's Workers' Party communications secretary Eden Valadares.

The campaign of Brazilian President was set to request the

disqualification of rival Bolsonaro yesterday over alleged interference by tech giant Meta.

The petition to be submitted to Brazil's top electoral court concerns "algorithmic manipulation" by the US company aimed at harming Lula's chances of winning, the campaign source said.

The information was first revealed by the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de S Paulo* yesterday.

Meta and lawyers from both campaigns will meet at the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) on Tuesday, a court source said.

The court on Monday gave Meta 24 hours to prove it was complying with an order to treat both campaigns equally, threatening a daily fine of around \$200,000 if it didn't. The order came after Lula's campaign alleged that Meta, which owns Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, was suppressing his online content to boost Bolsonaro ahead of Sunday's runoff.

Alberta separatists lose vote on leaving Canada

AFP
Edmonton, Canada

Canada's province of Alberta rejected a plan to hold a binding independence referendum, results showed yesterday, a win for unity as the country faces worsening ties with the US.

Public broadcaster CBC and leading private network CTV projected a clear win for the federalist side, with official results showing more than 76% support for Alberta remaining in Canada with nearly 45% of ballots counted.

Prime Minister Mark Carney welcomed the result and said Albertans had made a "clear choice" in favour of unity.

"They chose unity, to build together, and to take care of each other," he said in a statement on X.

Carney, who grew up in Alberta, urged the province to reject separatism and argued that Canada needed stability as it confronted US President Donald Trump's trade war and annexation threats.

A sombre mood took over the restaurant in the provincial capital Edmonton where a leading separatist group watched the returns.

Jeffrey Rath, a top leader of the separatist Alberta Prosperity Project, told reporters his push for independence will "absolutely" continue, despite the result from Monday's vote.

"As far as I'm concerned we've already won. We've created a massive movement in this province," Rath said.

"We've been educating Albertans on the benefits of independence and we're continuing to move forward."

Separatist supporter Roger Hodgkinson, an 82-year-old retired doctor, told AFP "this movement is not going to stop."

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, a conservative who opposed independence, praised the "widespread support for remaining in Canada" yesterday.

Smith, who called the referendum, said a win for the federalists would settle the secession issue, which has divided the province.

Thomas Lukaszk, who leads the pro-unity group Forever Canadian, said it was "amazing to see the enthusiasm and resolve among Canadians."

Alberta has the world's fourth-largest proven oil reserves, and much of the separatist momentum has been driven by anger over oil industry management.

Smith blamed Carney's predecessor Justin Trudeau for igniting the separatist fire, accusing him of trying to crush oil production to advance his pro-climate agenda.

Alberta's independence push has also drawn sustained interest from Trump allies. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent called Alberta a "natural partner" for the US. Elon Musk, the world's richest person and a top Trump supporter, posted this month that Alberta "should separate."

Rath of the Alberta Prosperity Project also held meetings at the US State Department, while separatists received advice from Republican political operatives.

Hegseth, Netanyahu discuss Iran during visit to Israel

Reuters
Jerusalem

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth discussed Iran with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during an unannounced visit to Israel on Monday, three Israeli officials said, as tensions flare between the US and Iran.

Doron Spielman, a spokesperson for the prime minister, later confirmed to Reuters that Netanyahu had met with Hegseth at the Uvda air force base in Israel's southern Negev desert region.

Netanyahu and Hegseth discussed "the threats in the region" and the US-Israel partnership in dealing both offensively and defensively with those threats, he said in a brief phone call.

Hegseth also thanked Israel for hosting US forces, which Spielman said numbered in the thousands, and discussed President Donald Trump's support for the prime minister. "There's a deep personal relationship here that was at the core of this discussion," Spielman said.

Hegseth earlier posted on X that he had visited US service members in the Central Command area of responsibility, which covers the Middle East, northeast Africa and parts of Asia. Hegseth's visit comes as tensions flare between the US and Iran over Hormuz and as d Houthi intensify their attacks on Saudi Arabia.

'Congress could do little to stop Trump agenda'

Reuters
Washington

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said yesterday that there is not much a Democrat-led House of Representatives could do to stop the Trump administration's agenda.

"I think there's very little," Bessent said in an interview on 2Way TV two weeks ahead of November's midterm elections.

"We have very durable tariff authorities," he said, referring to Democrats' opposition to Trump broadly imposing tariffs on goods imported from countries around the world.

Control of Congress is at stake as voters head to the polls on November 3. The Republican Party currently has a narrow majority in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The election comes as Trump's approval rating has dipped over his handling of the high cost of living for Americans during the US-Israeli war on Iran that has raised fuel prices.

Sudanese drone attack killed more than 150 people in Abyei market, says official

Reuters
Nairobi

South Sudanese officials said Sudan's military had carried out drone strikes that hit a market in the disputed Abyei region, killing more than 150 people, one of the deadliest attacks in a war that has spilled across Sudan's borders.

The strike showed the lethality of airstrikes in Sudan's war, which erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), triggering a major humanitarian crisis and drawing in local militias and foreign powers.

According to local authorities, the attack that hit the market in Abyei took place around midday on Monday. Yohana Akol Ngor, the caretaker minister of information in Abyei, told Reuters yesterday that the death toll had jumped to 153 from 73 but the toll was likely to rise further.

"The fire is still burning. So the recovery process of the dead ones is still continuing. The situation is terrible," Ngor said, adding that some bodies had been burned to ashes.

A video filmed at the scene on Tuesday and verified by Reuters showed the charred and twisted



Rubble left after fires at Alneam market following a drone strike in the Abyei region. (Reuters)

remains of vehicles and buildings. Flames still billowed from one building as residents inspected the damage.

He said Sudan's army was responsible for the attack, without providing evidence. A spokesperson for Sudan's armed forces did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Three diplomatic sources, an aid worker and an expert on the conflict told Reuters the strike hit a fuel depot in the market. The diplomatic sources said the depot had been used in the past by the RSF to supply its forces. A spokesperson

for the RSF did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

South Sudan declared independence from Sudan in 2011. Since then, both countries have staked a claim to oil-rich Abyei, which is jointly administered. It borders Sudan's Kordofan region, which has become a major centre of fighting in Sudan's war.

Officials in Sudan's military-led government told Reuters the RSF is active in parts of Abyei. Ngor denied the presence of the RSF in Abyei. Reuters could not immediately verify the claims.

The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) warned in May that the presence of the RSF in Abyei had increased insecurity there, adding that delays in determining the disputed region's final status had put civilians and UNISFA personnel at risk.

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said the UN strongly condemned the series of drone attacks in Abyei and other areas.

"We remain alarmed by the relentless drone attacks across Sudan, as well as the damage they are causing to critical infrastructure — these attacks are taking a devastating toll on communities already struggling with the consequences of more than three years of conflict," Dujarric told reporters in New York.

Militants kill at least 48 civilians in eastern Mali

Reuters
Bamako

Islamic State-linked militants have killed at least 48 people in Mali in apparent retaliation for an attack on suspected informants by pro-government forces including members of Russia's Africa Corps, two security sources and two local officials told Reuters.

The violence at the weekend in the eastern Menaka region comes amid intensifying combat between the regional Islamic State group and Al-Qaeda affiliates, compounding insecurity in West Africa's Sahel region.

The attacks by fighters from Islamic State Sahel Province took place in at least five localities in Menaka and the overall toll was still being determined yesterday, said the four sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals from Mali's government.

They appeared to be in response to abuses allegedly carried out last week in the area by a pro-government militia known as MSA and Africa Corps, the Russian paramilitary group that backs Bamako, the sources said.

"The militiamen from MSA who accompanied (Mali's army)

and Africa Corps committed abuses against civilians suspected of being informants for the Islamic State," a municipal official in Menaka said.

"They killed about a dozen people, set fire to houses, and stole other property."

During the retaliatory attacks on Sunday, ISSP set houses on fire and stole livestock, sending hundreds of civilians fleeing to Menaka town, said the four sources, who provided provisional death tolls ranging from 48 to more than 70.

Some of the civilians died in the fires and others were shot, the sources said.

Mali has previously denied killing civilians in counterinsurgency operations.

Mali has been battling insurgents since 2012 when Tuareg separatists and Al-Qaeda-linked militants first swept across the country's north, triggering a French military intervention.

The regional Al-Qaeda affiliate, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin, and the Tuareg-led Azawad Liberation Front staged nationwide attacks in April that killed the defence minister and hit the main airport in Bamako. In recent weeks JNIM has been locked in fierce fighting with ISSP.

Colombian president's new 'Temu White House' fuels debate over seat of power

AFP
Barranquilla, Colombia

Colombia's new right-wing leader has built himself a costly new presidential palace — a white-columned mansion far from Bogota that doubles as a political manifesto.

Tucked inside a Caribbean military base, President Abelardo de la Espriella's new headquarters is meant to embody two of his signature promises: a focus on Colombia's security forces and shifting power away from a capital accused of neglecting the country's regions. The austere neoclassical building, set amid tropical gardens and palm trees in Barranquilla, has quickly become one of the most visible symbols of his presidency. Admirers see a bold statement of decentralisation from a leader determined to govern from beyond Bogota. "For a very long time, the coast and the regions outside Bogota have been forgotten," said Libardo Charris, a 54-year-old furniture merchant in Barranquilla. The debate has even prompted

questions about whether a city of about 1.3mn people is the new seat of power. De la Espriella has frequently refers to Barranquilla as the "alternative capital." Critics dismiss it as an expensive political stage set that has earned the mocking nickname "the Temu White House."

Constitutional experts say transforming Barranquilla into an official alternative seat of government would be difficult, although some Colombian presidents have occasionally governed from cities outside the capital. "It is not an alternative capital. It is a place where the president stays for a few days and carries out his functions," constitutional lawyer Juan Manuel Charry told AFP.

Creating a second capital would require constitutional reform and approval by Congress.

From the streets around the sprawling military compound, little of the mansion can be seen.

The property sits inside a restricted area of more than 50,000 square metres, roughly the size of several soccer fields.

A modest sign outside reads:



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio (second right) and his wife are welcomed by by Colombia's President Abelardo de la Espriella and his wife upon their arrival in Barranquilla. (AFP)

"Presidency of the Republic. Freedom and Order."

The mansion has already hosted high-profile visitors, including US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Costa Rican President Laura Fernandez. Military personnel continue their daily routines around the complex, while official

vehicles, aides and security details come and go. The facilities include an underground bunker designed to shelter the president and senior civilian and military officials in a crisis.

An admirer of US President Donald Trump, De la Espriella has bristled at comparisons between

his new base and the White House.

Yet social media has filled with memes highlighting the resemblance, while critics accuse him of embracing symbolism over substance. De la Espriella often works from the compound dressed in tactical clothing, dark glasses and a baseball cap, blending into the military surroundings.

He arrives by helicopter or in convoys of armored vehicles, images regularly showcased on his social media accounts.

Recently he led a security operation in a nearby city carrying a pistol on his belt. Better known as the hometown of pop star Shakira and for its carnival celebrations than as a center of political power, Barranquilla has found itself unexpectedly at the heart of national politics.

Gabriel Sanchez, a 47-year-old shopkeeper, said he welcomed the fact that Colombia's Caribbean region was now receiving greater attention. Under De la Espriella, he said, the coast is "more visible."

Street vendor Darlyns Patricia Guerrero, 40, said it was "great" to have a presidential headquarters in the sweltering coastal city

rather than the high-altitude capital. "I've never seen the president around here," she told AFP outside the Paradise Battalion base.

At a time of fiscal strain, opponents question the roughly \$650,000 spent renovating the 1938 mansion, according to the Atlantico province's governor, as well as the cost of moving presidential operations to the Caribbean coast.

The criticism is pointed because De la Espriella, a wealthy former lawyer, won office promising a hard line against crime, a defense of traditional values and a leaner state. Opponents argue that true decentralisation requires transferring resources and decision-making powers to the regions rather than relocating the president's desk.

"There are two governments: the one shown to the cameras and another behind it that we see in the territories," said Edwin Capaz Lectamo, an Indigenous leader.

Yet beyond the legal questions, political arguments and online jokes, the Barranquilla headquarters has revived a long-running rivalry between Colombia's Caribbean coast and the Andean capital.

Power outage at Google Cloud centre hits UK banks

AFP
London

A power outage at a Google Cloud data centre near London caused serious failures to services yesterday, leading to widespread disruptions for several UK banks.

Google said in a service health update that most services had returned to normal by 1210 GMT, six hours after the incident began.

“We are seeing the recovery of services for most workloads in europe-west2,” the US tech giant said, referring to its London data centre.

Google said its cloud services suffered an outage “due to a power event”, in an incident that began at 0608 GMT.

Services for the digital bank Revolut, including withdrawals from ATMs, bank transfers and bank card top-ups, were disrupted, which a source close to the

matter attributed to the Google Cloud failures.

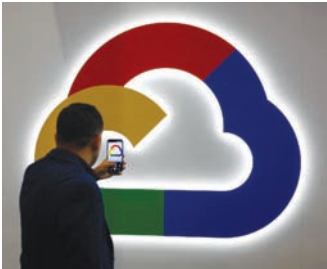
UK lenders Lloyds and HSBC confirmed that customers faced issues with their banking services.

“We understand the root issues have been resolved, so we expect all our services to be back to normal soon,” Lloyds said in a statement yesterday afternoon.

Internet service tracker Down-detector indicated that hundreds of reports had been made of problems affecting business in the UK, including the property website Rightmove, delivery service DPD and the Royal Mail postal service.

HSBC said its customers experienced “difficulties accessing our services”, adding that it would “monitor the situation, which is also affecting other organisations”.

A Revolut spokesperson said the bank was “working to fix the issue since it was identified” and offered its apologies “to anyone affected and for any inconvenience caused”.



A person takes a photo of the Google Cloud logo in Barcelona. (Reuters/File Photo)

“We can confirm that all our customers’ money and data are safe,” the spokesperson added in a statement.

Google said it would publish a full incident report in the coming days.

The outage has renewed concerns over the global reliance on cloud providers, which offer businesses on-demand IT resources without heavy investment in expensive server farms.

Local providers have seen their

share of the market shrink in recent years and been captured by foreign giants known as “hyperscalers”.

A global outage at Amazon’s cloud services last year disrupted many online services for video games, business and transport firms and made part of the Internet inaccessible for several hours.

Only three major hyperscalers – Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services – have the infrastructure to handle vast amounts of data needed by businesses at scale in the UK, said University of Surrey cybersecurity professor Alan Woodward.

These centres remain “susceptible to localised infrastructure failures”, which can have significant knock-on effects when so many businesses depend on just a handful of providers, he added.

He said the problem is “intensifying with the AI boom” as demand for hyperscalers rises, meaning “we are becoming more reliant on these few massive entities”.

UK to deploy fighter jets to protect Saudi from Houthi attacks: govt

AFP
London

British fighter planes will be deployed to help Saudi Arabia defend itself against increasing attacks from Yemen’s Houthi rebels, the UK government announced yesterday.

The defence ministry said the deployment formed part of “additional defensive military support” to Riyadh.

“The UK will fly defensive counter air missions to support the protection of Saudi cities and critical national infrastructure against aerial attack, using RAF Typhoon fighter jets,” the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said in a statement.

“These aircraft will operate in a defensive role and will not conduct offensive strikes against the Houthis.”

Britain will also deploy a military transport aircraft “to support the movement of defence material within Saudi Arabia alongside UK military advisers to

support Saudi staff officers”, the statement added.

“The continuing attacks from the Houthis on our ally Saudi Arabia are absolutely despicable,” said defence minister Wes Streeting.

“The targeting of the airport in Riyadh in particular shows the lengths the Houthis are going to (to) escalate the situation in the region,” he added.

The Saudi capital’s international airport has been targeted by strikes 20 times since the beginning of the month, with a recent attack killing 13 people and wounding more than 300.

The Houthis have imposed a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, hitting its tankers, seizing swathes of Yemen’s Red Sea coast vital for oil exports and causing energy prices to jump, while also raining missiles on the kingdom.

Yemen’s civil war – in which Saudi Arabia has led a military coalition supporting the government since 2015 – reignited in September after the collapse of a years-long truce.

Japan slams lack of access to journalist detained in Russia

AFP
Tokyo

Tokyo said yesterday it was “extremely regrettable” that its diplomats had been unable to visit a Japanese journalist detained in Russia, despite a bilateral protocol that guarantees the right to consular access.

Russia arrested the journalist from the Hokkaido Shimbun newspaper on the Far East island of Sakhalin a week ago on suspicion of espionage.

Moscow has arrested several citizens of what it calls “unfriendly” countries in recent years, accusing them of working for Western intelligence services.

Japan has denied the spying allegation and demanded that Russia release the man.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Mi-noru Kihara said the protocol, which was signed between Japan and the Soviet Union and remains effective with Russia, ensures the right to consular access within “a period of no later than four days from the time of arrest or detention”.

“It is therefore extremely regrettable that, despite this provision, a consular visit was not realised within the prescribed period,” Kihara said.

Japan will “continue to strongly urge the Russian side to arrange a consular visit at the earliest possible time”, he said, adding that Tokyo was also demanding his release, humanitarian consideration, and fair treatment.

Russian media reported that the journalist would remain in custody until December 12.

Moscow’s foreign ministry last week identified the arrested reporter as Yuki Imai, with a spokeswoman saying he was accused of “conducting espionage activities on Russian territory”.

Russia’s FSB security service said a Japanese national was arrested on Sakhalin – near a disputed cluster of islands – but did not name the individual.

It said the person had worked for Japanese intelligence to collect information about Russia’s defences.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi denied the spying claim, saying “there is no such fact”.



Indonesian police officers and a military personnel examining a large charred metallic fragment, suspected to be rocket debris, at an oil palm plantation in East Kotawaringin Regency, in Indonesia’s Central Kalimantan province.(AFP)

Indonesia investigates crash of suspected Chinese rocket debris

AFP
Jakarta

Indonesian authorities were investigating yesterday after a car-sized piece of debris, possibly from a Chinese rocket according to a government agency, crashed into a palm oil plantation near homes and work sites.

The debris was found on Monday morning by a plantation worker in Indonesian Borneo, after residents reported hearing a loud bang the previous evening over a remote area of Central Kalimantan province.

“It was just there. At first, I thought it might have been aircraft debris,” Wardi Tamroni told AFP of his discovery near the town of Sampit. Wardi, 51, said the object had crashed about three kilometres (1.9 miles) from the housing complex of the PT Agro Bukit palm oil company he works for.

“We usually carry out our activities in the area where the object fell,” he added.

“Fortunately, all the workers had already gone home, so no one

was left in the plantation.”

Local police chief I Kadek Dwi Yoga Sidhimantra described the object as “a fairly large aluminium plate measuring up to nine metres (30 feet) with an irregular shape and visible burn marks”.

The incident did not cause loss of life or property damage, according to civil aviation spokesman Zachrudien, who like many Indonesians has one name.

The debris also posed no radiation or toxicity risks, he added.

Indonesia’s National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) said the debris appeared to come from a Chinese Zhuque-2E rocket.

The Chinese government said last week that a Zhuque-2E had launched 10 satellites into space from a commercial launch site in the country’s northwest.

The China National Space Administration could not be immediately reached for comment.

BRIN researcher Thomas Djamaluddin said not all parts of a spacecraft necessarily burn up on re-entry into Earth’s atmosphere, and more heat-resistant parts may reach the surface.

Seoul warns of ‘firm’ response to further N Korea provocation

AFP
Seoul

Republic of Korea’s military warned yesterday of a “firm” response and resolute punishment for any further provocations by North Korea, saying it was “unacceptable” for Pyongyang to blame Seoul for escalating tensions.

North Korea has rejected claims it was behind an explosion that injured three soldiers last month inside the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), the heavily mined buffer area that has divided the two Koreas since their 1953 armistice, and mockingly dismissed calls for an apology.

Pyongyang said Monday the situation along the two countries’ shared border was “grave” and that it was considering deploying additional “tactical strike means” to the area.

It also decreed what it claimed were nearly 1,000 “provocative” loudspeaker broadcasts and numerous warning shots fired by South Korean forces between October 1 and 17.

Seoul said yesterday, without specifying the number of occurrences, that it had used both loudspeakers and warning shots as “legitimate defensive measures



Republic of Korea’s soldiers patrol along a military fence on the south side of the Demilitarised Zone dividing the two Koreas, as seen from a Korean observatory in the border city of Paju yesterday. (AFP)

to prevent North Korean troops from crossing the MDL (Military Demarcation Line) and to drive back troops that have crossed it”.

The MDL is the border within the DMZ that separates the two countries.

Jin Yong-sung, chairman of Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, accused Pyongyang of “baselessly shifting the blame for escalating military tensions onto our own military”.

“It is unacceptable that North Korea yesterday characterised our legitimate operational measures as a ‘provocation,’” Jin said, according to a statement.

Jin ordered the military to “respond with firm resolve” should North Korea use Seoul’s actions as a pretext for aggressive ac-

tion, while the defence ministry warned they would be met with “resolute” punishment.

A string of cross-border incidents has weighed on North-South ties in recent years.

In 2024, North Korea sent thousands of trash-carrying balloons south, calling them retaliation for anti-Pyongyang balloons launched by Korean activists.

The South later resumed border loudspeaker broadcasts for the first time in six years, including K-pop and international news, while the North began transmitting strange, eerie sounds across the frontier, unsettling South Korean residents.

“What North Korea fears is not so much the warning shots used to drive their troops back,

but Seoul’s loudspeaker broadcasts and the distribution of anti-North Korea leaflets,” Hong Sung-pyo, senior researcher at the Korea Institute for Military Affairs, told AFP.

“They are very sensitive to such measures because they could expose information that the regime has sought to conceal – the realities of South and North Korea.”

Seoul has accused Pyongyang of “a clear violation of the Armistice Agreement” over the explosion that injured South Korean soldiers in the DMZ, while Seoul’s civilian leadership called for the North to return to dialogue.

Pyongyang has since ridiculed Korean President Lee Jae Myung’s overture, with Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of the North’s leader, dubbing it “the climax of the farce”.

Korea’s Defence Minister Kang Shin-chul said last month that its military had “a range of necessary measures at our disposal, and we will implement them in stages” to respond to the DMZ mine incident, without giving details.

North Korea has separately tested a slew of weapons recently, including a “new-type” precision-guided torpedo system and an intermediate-range hypersonic missile, both of which were said to employ AI technology.

Malaysia de-registers main opposition bloc as elections loom

Malaysia cancelled the registration of the country’s main opposition coalition Perikatan Nasional (PN) yesterday amid a dispute between its key parties, dealing a blow to the bloc ahead of elections expected in coming months.

Malaysia’s Malacca state is due to hold a vote on November 14, in the latest test for Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim following defeats in two other regional polls earlier this year. An early general election could also be triggered amid simmering tensions within Anwar’s multi-party ruling coalition.

But opposition group PN is facing growing rifts of its own between the conservative Islamist party PAS – which has the most seats of any single party in Malaysia’s 222-member parliament – and the Malay nationalist party Bersatu, with both vying for leadership of the coalition.

Bersatu, led by former prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin, had filed a complaint to the Registrar of Societies alleging that it had been excluded from a PN supreme council meeting in July, describing it as a breach of the coalition’s constitution by rival grouping PAS.

RoS said in a Tuesday statement that it had received an unsatisfactory response from PN after warning last month that the bloc could face de-registration.

It said “the reasons given failed to refute the grounds for the cancellation of registration”.

PN’s dissolution would mean that its component parties, including several other smaller organisations aside from Bersatu and PAS, would not be able to contest the elections under a common banner.

PN secretary-general Takiyuddin Hassan, who is also a PAS leader, said the coalition

would file a legal challenge against the de-registration order.

“PN condemns this action as an attempt to... weaken political opponents ahead of the Malacca election,” Takiyuddin said in a statement.

Premier Anwar leads a government consisting of several blocs, including his own Pakatan Harapan coalition as well as the Barisan Nasional, led by the once-dominant United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the party of jailed former premier Najib Razak.

Despite their federal partnership, Pakatan and Barisan remain rivals in some states, with the parties exploring different electoral strategies ahead of the next general election.

Barisan and the Islamist PAS have said they are discussing cooperation in the Malacca polls, an arrangement that could test the prospects of a broader electoral alliance, according to local media reports. (Reuters)

China sends naval forces to monitor US warship near disputed shoal

Reuters
Beijing/Taipei

China’s military said yesterday it had sent forces to watch a US warship that “illegally” entered waters around a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, while further north in the waterway, Taiwan reported a standoff with a Chinese vessel.

China views almost all of the South China Sea as its own territory, despite overlapping claims by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam, with recent tension most pronounced between Beijing and Manila.

The Chinese military’s Southern Theatre Command said the USS Charleston “illegally intruded” into waters adjacent to Sabina Shoal in the Spratly Islands without Chinese government approval in the early hours of Tuesday.

“The US action infringes upon China’s sovereign rights and interests, jeopardises maritime security, and is detrimental to re-



A China Coast Guard vessel patrols at the disputed Scarborough Shoal. (Reuters/File photo)

gional peace and stability,” it said in a statement.

“The US side should immediately cease such activities”

China’s navy dispatched forces to track and monitor the ship, it added.

The US Navy did not immediately respond to a request for comment. It generally refers to such missions as “freedom of navigation operations” though its last known one in the South China Sea was more than a year ago.

A Philippines’ military spokesperson said the US ship “did not trespass into ‘Chinese territory’” adding that no nation had the

authority to require prior permission for “lawful transit through international waters”.

Last month, a China Coast Guard vessel rammed a Philippine boat on a refuelling mission near the same shoal, according to the Philippine Coast Guard. China blamed the collision on the Philippine side.

China and the Philippines, which has a mutual defence treaty with the US, both contest sovereignty over Sabina Shoal and the entire Spratly Islands archipelago.

In a separate incident yesterday at the top end of the South China Sea, Taiwan’s Coast Guard said

a Chinese Coast Guard ship had entered restricted waters near the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands.

The Taiwan Coast Guard said its ship the “Taichung” was dispatched to warn away the Chinese boat, while both sides broadcast messages to each other.

The Chinese ship broadcast that “the so-called Republic of China does not exist”, referring to Taiwan’s official name, while the Taiwanese ship broadcast back that “the Republic of China, Taiwan, is a sovereign and independent country”, Taiwan’s Coast Guard said, adding the standoff was continuing.

China’s Taiwan Affairs Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Pratas Islands lie roughly between southern Taiwan and Hong Kong, but are only lightly defended and security is the responsibility of Taiwan’s Coast Guard.

China has also been stepping up coast guard activity around Taiwan, including off the island’s east coast, causing concern in Western capitals.

On the El Nino trail, the impacts around the world this week

From starving cattle in parched El Salvador to a “terrifying” threat to the world’s coral reefs, this year’s exceptionally strong El Nino is being felt across the globe. This year’s El Nino adds “a terrifying level of additional risk” for the world’s coral reefs, David Obura, chair of the UN’s expert nature panel, said. Corals are highly sensitive to heat, and climate change is making bleaching events more frequent and intense.

Obura led a major reassessment of coral health, published in ‘Nature’, that found reef-building species had deteriorated sharply since the last global census in 2008. Forests are also at risk. Global deforestation slowed last year, according to the independent Forest Declaration Assessment, but the gains are unlikely to last as conditions worsen in Central Africa and El Nino raises fire risks across the tropics.

Drought fueled by El Nino is wreaking havoc across Central America’s Dry Corridor, which stretches

from Mexico to Panama. At a livestock market in Sensuntepeque, El Salvador, starving cows with protruding ribs were found. “Imagine how thin this little animal is! Why? Because of a lack of grass,” said Antonio Aguilar, a 54-year-old rancher, pointing to a cow reduced to skin and bones.

The El Nino, expected to peak by year’s end, is unfolding amid accelerating human-caused warming, which amplifies its effects. A warmer atmosphere dries out soil, deepening drought, and holds more moisture, making rains more extreme. UN development chief Alexander De Croo said that El Nino, combined with surging energy costs and higher interest rates, could push millions into poverty as the vulnerable are hit by crisis after crisis. He urged private investors to recognise both the “economic cost” of climate change and the “business case” for tackling it.

Sri Lanka’s central bank warned that El Nino could undermine the island’s fragile recovery from its worst

economic crisis in decades, with torrential rains forecast through December and prolonged drought early next year. How this El Nino ranks depends on how it is measured, and agencies’ differing methods make direct comparisons difficult.

Britain’s Met Office calls it “unprecedented” and Japan’s weather agency calls it the strongest ever observed, but US forecasters have not declared a record -- yet. “By any measure, we are looking at a very strong El Nino,” climate scientist Emily Becker of the University of Miami said. She added that only once it is over will scientists know “where it fits in the context of history.”

Because climate change is warming oceans everywhere, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) now measures how warm or cool the east-central Pacific is compared with the rest of the tropical ocean. That difference is what drives global weather impacts.

4.3C: How much hotter than normal August was in El Salvador, according to an AFP analysis of Copernicus satellite, ground-station and modelled data. Many less well-equipped nations do not publish detailed climate data of their own.

1982: The strongest El Nino year in NOAA’s dataset. The agency says the current event will likely surpass it.

44%: The share of reef-building coral species threatened with extinction in the latest global assessment. Since then, the fourth global bleaching event and this year’s El Nino have put corals in even greater jeopardy.

Under NOAA’s updated index, a 2.5C anomaly in a key Pacific region relative to the rest of the tropical ocean, sustained over three months, would make for the most intense El Nino on record. That might not sound like much, but the El Nino-Southern Oscillation is the leading natural driver of year-to-year climate variability. — AFP



Red Cross volunteers help evacuees at a multi-purpose centre after torrential rains caused floods in Oliva, Valencia province, Spain, yesterday. (Reuters)



QNA
Doha

Qatar and France share distinguished partnerships in the educational, academic, research, and pedagogical fields. These partnerships serve as an advanced model of strategic co-operation, rooted in building a knowledge-based society and investing in human capital to ensure a bright and promising future for both friendly nations.

These partnerships are rooted in an enduring legacy and close strategic ties, strengthened over decades of co-operation, as well as within the framework of the ongoing strategic dialogue between the two countries and the bilateral agreements signed across various educational and academic sectors and fields.

This strategic educational co-operation encompasses public K-12 education, higher education, scholarship programs, student and expertise exchanges, reciprocal visits, and language instruction. It also involves the signing of relevant agreements and memoranda of understanding, as well as the organisation of joint events to strengthen cultural, educational, and intellectual ties.

The enduring partnership between the two friendly nations is also evident in the fields of education, higher education, and scientific research, through joint academic programs and French educational institutions operating in Qatar. Qatar is home to numerous long-established French educational institutions and schools that provide an excellent standard of education and contribute to enriching the cultural and academic diversity of the educational landscape.

Strategic dialogue

Educational and academic co-operation between Doha and Paris holds a significant place within the strategic dialogue between the two friendly nations. Through joint committees, both sides strive to explore new avenues for linking higher education and scientific research institutions with sustainable development and technological innovation projects. They also work to implement initiatives for the exchange of expertise, curriculum development, and the construction of a knowledge-based economy-all in alignment with the Qatar National Vision 2030.

To strengthen this co-operation, Qatar and France have established a joint committee to oversee all education-related matters between the two friendly nations. Several French higher education institutions operate in Qatar, such as HEC Paris, which offers a range of distinguished programs tailored to the

Qatar-France: Advanced model for partnership in the field of education

needs of the labour market, alongside the French Institute in Qatar. As the largest cultural institution affiliated with the French Embassy in the country, the Institute aims to promote the French language and culture, disseminate the values of the Francophone world, and provide courses, workshops, and language proficiency examinations.

HE Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) Ibrahim bin Saleh al-Nuaimi affirmed that educational and academic relations between Qatar and France are witnessing significant development, underpinned by a shared commitment to further strengthening ties across various areas of mutual interest.

This encompasses general and higher education, scholarship programs, and the teaching of the French language in Qatar. He further highlighted the Education, Health, and Sports working group, part of the Qatari-French Strategic Dialogue, which he chairs and which includes representatives from the MoEHE and other relevant national entities. The group’s most recent meeting took place in May.

HE Dr al-Nuaimi told Qatar News Agency (QNA) that, as part of the MoEHE’s efforts to enhance co-operation between Qatar and the French Republic, and to strengthen ties in a manner that serves the mutual interests of both nations, the MoEHE is holding meetings of the steering committee for co-operation in the field of education. These meetings aim to follow up on matters related to the teaching of the French language to students in public schools.

In this regard, His Excellency added that the MoEHE is also coordinating the work of the steering committee for co-operation in higher education, which helps facilitate the educational experience for Qatari scholarship students in the French Republic.

His Excellency highlighted the exploratory visit undertaken by a high-level delegation from the MoEHE to the French Republic in January. He noted its significant role in expanding the scope of existing educational co-operation between the two sides. This includes strengthening linguistic collaboration, establishing a mechanism to monitor the status of Qatari scholarship students in France, and enhancing cooperation in the field of higher education.

His Excellency emphasized the depth



of the historic educational partnership between the two friendly nations across the fields of education, higher education, and scientific research. This is evidenced by joint academic programs, the presence of French educational institutions in Qatar, and student exchange initiatives, as demonstrated by the operation of various French educational institutions in Qatar and the enrollment of Qatari students in prestigious French universities. Furthermore, co-operation between Qatar University and French universities in the areas of scientific research and development continues to be strengthened, with a shared commitment to further expanding these partnerships in the future.

HE the Undersecretary of the MoEHE noted that, last week, he led an educational delegation from Qatar, as part of a broader Gulf delegation, which included representatives from the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS), in a series of successful meetings in Paris with officials from French public educational institutions. He emphasised the commitment of both Doha and Paris to implementing existing

educational agreements and memoranda of understanding, thereby strengthening their distinguished partnership in these vital and significant sectors.

French experience

Furthermore, he highlighted an openness to learning from leading international practices, adapting them to suit the unique characteristics of Qatar’s educational system and the priorities outlined in the Third National Development Strategy.

He noted the recent participation of Qatar, represented by the MoEHE, in a study visit to the French Republic, organized by the ABEGS and attended by undersecretaries of education from the Bureau’s member states. He pointed out that the visit provided a firsthand look at the French experience in the governance of the educational system, assessment and performance measurement frameworks, initial qualification and continuous professional development programs for teachers, curriculum development, science education, and the promotion of sustainable development within the school environment.

His Excellency added that the visit included meetings with officials from the French Ministry of National Education, the High Council for Curricula, and the General Inspectorate of Education, as well as with Unesco and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

His Excellency affirmed that the MoEHE will leverage the outcomes of this visit to enhance educational practices, prioritising students’ interests and the quality of learning, while strengthening joint educational efforts among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. Furthermore, the MoEHE intends to build upon its engagement with French educational institutions to expand the scope of co-operation between the two sides.

Partnerships between Qatar and France are strengthened in the fields of education, higher education, and scientific research through joint academic programs, the presence of French educational institutions in Qatar, and student exchange initiatives. These efforts also encompass scholarship programs for Qatari students to pursue studies at prestigious French universities, as well as co-operation between higher education institutions in both countries, such as the existing collaboration between Qatar University and various French universities in the areas of scientific research and development.

In this context, Assistant Undersecretary for Private Education Affairs at the MoEHE Omar Abdulaziz al-Namaa told QNA that the number of schools and kindergartens in Qatar that implement the French curriculum, as well as the number of students enrolled in them for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Al-Namaa indicated that there are 7 educational institutions in Qatar that follow the French curriculum, comprising 5 schools and 2 kindergartens, with a total enrollment of 4,492 students, including 692 Qatari nationals. He noted that these institutions encompass a variety of types, ranging from international kindergartens and international Qatari schools to joint Qatari-French international schools and private institutions.

He noted that the number of Qatari students graduating from the twelfth grade in French schools in Qatar for the 2025-2026 academic year is 44.

He noted that there are 9 nurseries in Qatar that either implement the French curriculum or offer programs for teaching the French language; specifically, 5 nurseries follow the French curriculum, while 4 provide French language instruction or cover the basics of the language. The total number of Qatari children enrolled in these nurseries is 129.

Lecornu vows ‘massive’ police deployment for new protests

AFP
Paris

French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu yesterday vowed a “massive” police presence at fresh protests called for the coming weekend, as he faced criticism over the handling of recent street violence.

The eurozone’s second-largest economy was rocked on Saturday by some of its worst rioting in recent years, just six months before voters head to the polls to elect a successor to President Emmanuel Macron.

Facing angry lawmakers in parliament, Lecornu acknowledged that the security response had fallen short and promised a stronger approach ahead of a new wave of protests.

“The deployment for next Saturday will be massive,” Lecornu said.

He accused ultra-left radical groups of forging an “insurrectionary plan” that led to the riots, which erupted on the sidelines of nationwide protests over the cost of living.

Images of clashes, mobs looting stores and public buildings set ablaze last weekend prompted several countries, including the United States, China and Germany, to issue travel advisories for their citizens in France.

French authorities on Monday announced partial curfews in Paris



French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu speaks during the questions to the government session at the National Assembly in Paris, yesterday. **(Reuters)**

and some other cities, and Lecornu said fresh curfews would be imposed yesterday where needed.

The nighttime curfew in the capital, from 2100 GMT yesterday, applied to Republique square in the centre east and the Les Halles district in the centre that is full of shops. A ban on public gatherings was also ordered for the Champs-Elysees, near several public buildings, and at train stations.

Paris police also ordered a temporary ban on people carrying cans or bottles of petrol or gas, after mobs set fire to government buildings and shops last weekend.

During the night, a helicopter flew over the French capital’s Place de la Republique, one of the epicentres of the unrest, sweeping a searchlight across the square

to monitor compliance with the curfew.

“The sound of a helicopter at one in the morning is a bit oppressive,” said Sylvain Courant, a resident of the Les Halles neighbourhood, another hotspot of the street violence.

“It’s that thing you see on TV, in all the good war films.”

Macron, currently on a Gulf tour where he secured additional diesel supplies in an effort to bring down prices, has acknowledged shortcomings in the handling of the protests.

France’s government is wrestling with high public debt and anger over soaring prices, and facing a strong challenge from the far-right.

The unrest on Saturday broke out after around half a million people turned out across France to denounce the cost of living, following four weeks of school protests.

On Monday, several cities, including Paris, the southwestern city of Bordeaux and Nice on the French Riviera introduced partial curfews.

A targeted curfew for minors was to be introduced in several districts of the southern port city of Marseille from yesterday evening and at least through Friday, a source close to the matter told AFP.

Security forces arrested a man believed to be connected to the ultra-left over the burning down of a historic town hall in Limoges,

whose destruction has become a symbol of the violence.

Authorities have come under criticism from parties across the political spectrum, with far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen describing the unrest as a “wake-up call” that exposed a “profound crisis” of authority.

Investors have sold off French debt in recent weeks amid rising doubts about the government’s ability to rein in spending.

Under pressure to support thousands of damaged or looted shops, the government said interest-free loans would be made available from Friday to all affected businesses, along with other measures.

Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin said nearly 150 people had been jailed and more than 800 brought before the courts.

He argued that a strong judicial response was necessary to prevent ordinary people from taking matters into their own hands.

“The justice system is being extremely firm,” he said. “People with no previous criminal record are being sent to prison.”

Some demonstrators were seriously injured. One man lost a hand to a police grenade. In the eastern city of Mulhouse, a 17-year-old girl lost an eye.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez offered to resign on Sunday, saying police “had lost control” during the unrest. Macron rejected his resignation.

Italy to send 500 troops to Milan after clashes

AFP
Rome

Italy was yesterday preparing to send 500 troops to Milan after violent clashes as fuel price protests hit pasta production and food deliveries in southern Italy.

Some luxury brands have kept their shops shut in the centre of Italy’s fashion hub after looting and riots over the weekend by mostly young protesters that left dozens of police officers injured.

A cabinet meeting yesterday was expected to give the go-ahead to the deployment and could approve policing powers for soldiers temporarily supporting law enforcement in the city.

The government is also considering a wider crackdown, including easing laws on detaining minors and measures to punish parents.

Hundreds of protesters were detained during two days of clashes in Milan and more protests are expected on Saturday.

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Saturday said the violent perpetrators were “thugs who exploit demonstrations to spread chaos, attack those who guarantee security, and hold entire cities hostage.”

“To demonstrate is a right. To lay our cities to waste is not,” she wrote on X.

Hard-right leader Meloni faces elections next year in which the state of the economy, secu-

urity and immigration are likely to be the key issues.

Italy has seen a wave of protests in recent days, particularly over rising cost of living and fuel prices, with high school and university students, farmers and truck drivers taking to the streets.

Truckers have blocked or disrupted traffic across southern Italy, hitting in particular vital food industry supply chains.

Garofalo, one of Italy’s leading pasta makers, stopped production on Saturday and resumed operations on Monday at just 40% of capacity.

“Our main customers have stocks, but I don’t know how long they will last,” chief executive Massimo Menna told AFP.

Menna said Garofalo has little room to manoeuvre if the blockades continue. “There’s nothing we can do. When everything stops, everything stops.”

He said he understood the reasons behind the protests, but feared the impact on poorer households.

“In times of crisis, it’s always the least well-off who suffer the most,” he said.

Fellow pasta maker Rummo has also suspended production, while another producer, La Molisana, has scaled back operations, as road blockades prevent flour deliveries from reaching factories.

Truck drivers began protesting on Friday against rising fuel costs, which have climbed since the outbreak of war in the Middle East.



US special envoy Steve Witkoff, Finland’s President Alexander Stubb, Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky and Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store enter a room for a meeting on the situation in Ukraine yesterday in Oslo. **(AFP)**

Zelensky, US envoys hold Oslo talks

AFP
Oslo

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky held talks in Oslo with top US envoys yesterday in a bid to get strained relations with Washington “on a more constructive path”, Norway said.

“Ukraine is working for peace. I thank our partners for their support!” Zelensky said in a social media post after his arrival in the Norwegian capital.

Zelensky handed US envoy Steve Witkoff an award in the Norwegian government’s official residence, before posing with Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store and Finnish President Alexander Stubb, according to footage accompanying the Ukrainian leader’s post.

Witkoff’s fellow US envoy Jared Kushner — US President Donald Trump’s son-in-law — was also taking part in the negotiations but was doing so remotely because of illness, according to the NTB agency.

Relations between Kyiv and Washington have soured since Trump partially lifted sanctions to strike a diesel-supply deal with Russia’s Vladimir Putin and slammed Zelensky as a war-monger for Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries.

Zelensky has accused the US of deliberately withholding vital intelligence and delaying military aid, saying on Monday that Ukraine received no early warning of powerful Russian missile strikes that targeted energy facilities in the capital region.

US-led diplomatic efforts to end Europe’s deadliest conflict since World War II have stalled in recent months, as Washington has shifted focus towards the war with Iran.

The Norway talks were set to continue into the evening, Store told reporters, with he and Zelensky set to give a press conference around 7:15pm (1715 GMT).

“The aim is to put diplomatic efforts on a more constructive path,” he said.

Ahead of the meeting, Zelensky said yesterday he held “substantive” and “constructive” talks with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in which he insisted that the US military satellite system Ukraine uses, Starshield, “needs to be restored” and that ballistic missile interceptors “are needed to protect lives”.

Zelensky told US senators on Monday that “the Pentagon is delaying the delivery of missiles” already paid for by European countries, and that the shipment was waiting for US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth’s signature.

He said several European countries were ready to transfer Patriot interceptor missiles from their own stockpiles but were still awaiting US approval.

The US has denied making any changes to intelligence sharing with Ukraine, and Rubio said yesterday that Washington was not deliberately withholding supplies.

“There’s nothing being deliberately denied to Ukraine,” Rubio said while on a trip to India.

“It’s simply, it’s a balance between our obligations to other partners and frankly our own... requirements for our own facilities as well.”

Trump has also denied ordering a reduction in speeds on the US government-owned and -controlled Starshield network after Elon Musk, whose company SpaceX developed it, said the order could only have come from the White House.

The US leader has accused his counterpart of not trying to resolve the conflict with Russia.

“Zelensky doesn’t know what he’s talking about,” Trump said on Monday.

“To be honest, I think it’s time for somebody else to negotiate on behalf of Ukraine.”

Trump said he was ready to meet Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping in China next month to discuss denuclearisation, adding that talks could also cover the Ukraine war — fuelling fears in Kyiv that it was being sidelined.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed earlier that “the topic of such a hypothetical has indeed been mentioned” when asked about a Wall Street Journal report on Sunday that Trump, Putin and Xi could meet.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said that such a meeting would “only encourage Putin to continue this war”.

News outlet Axios reported that Witkoff would travel from Oslo to Russia to meet Putin.

“We hope that it will be possible to arrange a meeting in the very near future, allowing the American negotiators... Mr Witkoff, to brief President Putin on their contacts with both the Ukrainians and the Europeans,” Peskov told reporters yesterday.

Reuters
Ankara

Turkiye has submitted a defence pact with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to parliament for ratification, three parliamentary sources said yesterday, moving Nato’s second-largest army closer to a formal mutual defence pledge with Riyadh as it faces Houthi attacks.

The three countries signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in August, under which an armed attack on one member is considered an attack on all.

The agreement’s first article says the parties shall use “all necessary means” to eliminate threats to one another’s territorial integrity, sovereignty or internationally recognised borders, according to a text seen by Reuters.

“In the event one of the parties is subjected to an armed attack or military aggression by another country or group of countries, the parties shall immediately provide assistance to the party un-

der attack, utilising the full range of mutual assistance measures available to them,” Article 2 of the agreement says.

The provision, similar to Nato’s Article 5, refers to Article 51 of the UN Charter, which covers the individual or collective right of states to self-defence against armed attack.

The three countries “will decide on the scope and nature of the support to be provided following an objective assessment of the assistance required” and will co-operate within their available resources, including military capabilities and resources, the same article says.

At an emergency meeting of the alliance in Riyadh earlier this month, the three countries agreed to ensure the “rapid deployment” of military forces and capabilities in Saudi Arabia.

Turkiye, which has a robust defence industry, has condemned Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, expressed willingness to help meet Riyadh’s military technology needs and agreed to join a Saudi-

led coalition to ensure navigation-safety in the Red Sea.

The agreement also envisages close co-operation on defence industry, intelligence sharing, logistical support and the fight against “all means of terrorism,” including at the operational level.

Parliamentary ratification is required for Turkiye to formally approve the agreement.

Parliament Speaker Numan Kurtulmus, currently visiting Kyrgyzstan, will refer the agreement to parliament’s foreign affairs commission upon his return, two of the sources said. The contents and details of the agreement are expected to become public once it is submitted to the commission.

The commission could debate the agreement as early as Friday, another source said.

President Tayyip Erdogan’s communications director, Burhanettin Duran, said that Turkiye’s recent step marked an important milestone towards the institutionalisation of strategic co-operation between the three nations.

Romanian parliament confirms new PM after months of deadlock

Reuters
Bucharest

Independent Luca Niculescu was confirmed as Romania’s prime minister by parliament yesterday, ending nearly six months of political deadlock that put pressure on its investment-grade rating and dented investor confidence.

Niculescu, 55, won a parliamentary vote of confidence after putting together a minority government of leftists and technocrats following his nomination by centrist President Nicusor Dan.

It was Dan’s fourth attempt to install a government in the Nato and European Union member state since a pro-European broad coalition cabinet collapsed in early May.

Niculescu, who has served as a diplomat and deputy foreign minister and was formerly a journalist, secured 280 votes in parliament, easily passing the 233 required.

But he has a daunting task in trying to tackle Romania’s economic problems, and political analysts said his government could be short-lived.

He must try to make further cuts to one of the EU’s largest budget deficits while propping up a contracting economy, eliminating an additional turnover tax on companies and raising pensions that fiscal constraints kept



Romania’s Prime Minister-Designate, Luca Niculescu, prepares to deliver a speech in the Romanian Parliament in Bucharest, yesterday. **(Reuters)**

frozen for two years.

“I am not asking for a blank check,” Niculescu told lawmakers before the vote. “I am asking you to understand Romania needs a government with full powers after so many months of crisis.”

If Niculescu’s government cannot get a deficit-reducing budget plan for 2027 through parliament in December, it will risk a ratings downgrade after it already sits on the last rung of investment grade, all the major ratings agencies have said.

Romania has agreed with Brussels to bring its budget deficit below 3% of economic output —

from over 9% in 2024 and an expected 6.2% this year — by 2030. On Monday, Moody’s said the green light for Niculescu’s cabinet would allow for the timely adoption of a 2027 budget that supports fiscal correction.

The leftist Social Democrats (PSD), which joined Niculescu’s government after toppling their former four-party coalition in early May, said they would re-assess their support in six months.

Niculescu has also signed political pacts with two centre-right parties from the former coalition in which they agree not to file any no-confidence votes before March 2027.

The Eurasia Group think tank said a new government “would restore short-term stability and unblock policymaking.”

“Ultimately, Niculescu’s ability to balance competing demands and maintain parliamentary support will determine whether the government can sustain stability beyond April 2027,” it said.

Romania’s next parliamentary election is due by late 2028. The country has never held an early election.

The opposition hard-right Alliance for Uniting Romanians, which has been critical of Brussels, defence procurement and aid for Ukraine, leads opinion polls with about 40% support.

Nato to send ‘additional assets’ to Black Sea

Nato said yesterday it will deploy “additional assets” to the Black Sea after a string of drone strikes off Romania and Bulgaria in the latest spillover from Russia’s war on Ukraine. “Nato will be sending additional assets to the region, including support for surveillance, reconnaissance, and forensics,” Nato spokeswoman Allison Hart posted online after a meeting of alliance ambassadors in Brussels. “We will continue to stand united and ensure that we are ready and able to address any threat and to keep our one bn people safe,” she added. The announcement from Nato came after Bulgaria’s Prime Minister Rumen Radev said that a US military plane had started to patrol the Black Sea following a plea for help after recent drone attacks. “An American P-8 Poseidon... has begun patrolling the Black Sea to conduct reconnaissance missions and detect any activity that could pose a risk,” said Radev.

He said some Nato countries were quick to answer his call for help after the attacks and that Sofia expects “further assistance”. The European Union’s top diplomat Kaja Kallas yesterday said that “six attacks in 10 days by suspected Russian drones marks a dangerous and unacceptable escalation”. **(AFP)**

Qatar and Korea reaffirm 52-year friendship amid regional challenges

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

Qatar and the Republic of Korea have reaffirmed their 52-year partnership, with Seoul expressing solidarity with Doha and highlighting co-operation in energy, infrastructure, culture and efforts to promote lasting regional peace.

Speaking at the Republic of Korea's National Day reception in Doha on Monday, ambassador Jeepio Hong emphasised the importance of the two countries standing by each other during difficult times, while highlighting decades of co-operation spanning trade, investment, education and cultural exchange.

"It's a time for showcasing Korea, what Korea has to offer," he told *Gulf Times*. "Our theme has always been about Qatar

and Korea, about the friendship that we have."

He said that Korean companies and citizens continue to play a key role in partnering with Qataris, adding that the embassy wanted to strengthen cultural understanding and share the Republic of Korea's achievements with Qatar.

"Our desire is to spread the Korean culture, spread the friendship, and spread all the wonderful things that Korea has to offer for Qatar," Hong said.

In his address, the envoy highlighted Korean workers' contribution to the Gulf's development during the 1970s, when companies from the Republic of Korea began seeking opportunities in the region.

Their work helped transform infrastructure across the Gulf, while remittances supported the country's own economic development.

"Part of modern Korea was built here, in these sands," he said, describing the relationship as one in which both countries had benefited from each other's ambitions and resources.

Energy co-operation remains a cornerstone of the partnership.

Qatar's liquefied natural gas (LNG) has helped meet the Republic of Korea's energy needs, while Korean shipbuilders have constructed some of the giant LNG carriers used to transport the fuel internationally.

Hong also highlighted co-operation in emerging sectors, including artificial intelligence (AI) and defence, alongside established links in healthcare, education and business.

Cultural and sporting ties have further strengthened relations.

Recalling the 2022 FIFA World Cup in

Qatar, the envoy referred to the Republic of Korea's dramatic qualification for the knockout stage and the joint performance by BTS singer Jungkook and Qatari singer Fahad al-Kubaisi at the tournament's opening ceremony.

The reception also celebrated Korean culture through a demonstration by a team from Kukkiwon, the world headquarters of taekwondo.

The envoy welcomed Grand Master Shin Jae-geun, a pioneer of the martial art in Qatar who trained members of the country's armed forces and coached its national team.

Addressing regional tensions, Hong expressed support for Qatar's mediation efforts and its pursuit of lasting peace and safe passage through regional waters.

"The Republic of Korea stands in solidarity with Qatar," he said, stressing that



Jeepio Hong and spouse Minjee Kwon at the reception.

friendship must extend beyond ceremonial occasions.

Hong stressed that the relationship was grounded in a shared belief that a nation's greatest wealth lies in its people, and that international partnerships are strongest when countries support one another through both prosperity and adversity.



Alfardan Group president and chief executive Omar Hussain Alfardan (third from left) and Alfardan Group chairman Hussain Alfardan at an exclusive event at the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Doha showroom.

Rolls-Royce brings Qatar's pearl-diving heritage to life through bespoke design

By Shaima Sherif
Staff Reporter

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars has drawn on Qatar's pearl-diving heritage and Britain's maritime traditions to create bespoke designs that transform luxury vehicles into stories of culture, craftsmanship and individuality.

The designs were showcased at an exclusive event at the Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Doha showroom, highlighting how traditional maritime influences can inspire contemporary automotive artistry.

Michelle Lusby, bespoke lead designer at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars' Private Office in Dubai, said that the Phantom Emerald and Cullinan Emerald showcase how the company draws on the historical significance of ship-building and pearl diving in the Middle East.

"We are here in Qatar to showcase some of our bespoke projects," she said, describing designs inspired by the region's maritime heritage and Britain's fishing and shipping industries.

The concept draws on two traditional vessels: the Arabic *sambuk*, closely associated with pearl diving and maritime trade in the

Gulf, and the Brixham trawler, which represents Britain's fishing heritage.

Lusby said that the two influences helped shape the design direction, connecting the vehicles' visual identity with the histories of the regions that inspired them.

One standout feature is the Phantom Emerald's two-tone exterior, combining a vibrant red upper section with a warm, off-white golden shade.

According to Lusby, the red recalls the sails of traditional Brixham trawlers, while the lighter finish reflects the aesthetic of traditional boats in the Middle East.

Attention to detail continues inside the vehicles, where bespoke marquetry features imagery of the vessels at the front and rear.

Mother-of-pearl marquetry further celebrates the material's association with the Gulf's pearl-diving past.

"On the interior, we've looked at adding these beautiful bespoke touches using marquetry, showcasing both of the ships in the front and the rear of the interior, as well as mother-of-pearl marquetry," Lusby said.

The presentation also featured bespoke material samples, offering visitors a glimpse into the craftspeople's work turning individual concepts into finished automotive details.



Lusby said that the company's bespoke team was particularly busy with projects across the Middle East, where clients could develop personal commissions reflecting their interests, stories and heritage.

Rolls-Royce builds vehicles at Goodwood in West Sussex, on England's south coast, a location Lusby said also informed the maritime inspiration behind the designs.

For Lusby, the showcase was ultimately an invitation for clients to explore their own creative ideas.

"We really inspire our clients to do their own commissions and their beautiful creations," she said.

The event demonstrated how bespoke automotive design can bridge cultures, bringing together Qatar's pearl-diving legacy and Britain's maritime history through materials, colours and craftsmanship.

Qatar brings expansive cultural programming to Art Basel Paris 2026

Art Basel Qatar partners – Qatar Sports Investments (QSI), a major investor in sports, culture, entertainment and lifestyle, and QC+, a cultural strategy and experience group specialising in cultural commerce – have announced a programme for Art Basel Paris 2026.



Chef Noof al-Marri

Anchored by the Qatar Lounge, presented with Qatar Airways at the Grand Palais, the activations will bring together art, culture, fashion, food and sport, showcasing Qatar's creative energy, global outlook and distinctive cultural identity while building momentum towards the second edition of Art Basel Qatar in 2027.

Qatar's presence will extend from the Grand Palais into the city through collaborations with renowned Qatari chef Noof al-Marri, acclaimed Doha- and Paris-based designer Yasmin Mansour, and French artist Nadjib Ben Ali.

The programme will also bring regional and international creative voices into conversation, with Qatar Creates Talks collaborating with Art Basel Talks on a conversation featuring Alexandre de Betak and Massimiliano Gioni, the Toby Devan Lewis Director of the New Museum in New York.

"Art Basel Paris gives us an opportunity to bring art and sport into the same conversation on the global stage," said QC+ chief executive Kirstin Mearns.

"Through these activations, we are showcasing exceptional creative talent from Qatar and the wider region while creating new connections with international audiences," she said. "This programme reflects the ambition behind our partnership with Art Basel and the creative exchange we want to continue building towards Art Basel Qatar in 2027."

Open to all Art Basel attendees, the Qatar Lounge will provide a calm and welcoming environment for fair visitors.

Its design draws inspiration from Al Khous, the traditional craft of palm-frond weaving, translating elements of Qatari heritage into a contemporary setting.

The space uses a natural palette of sand, straw, pale gold, and bone, paired with mineral finishes and filtered light, to evoke the warmth and shade of a palm oasis.

The Qatar Lounge will also feature an exclusive culinary concept by Chef Noof, renowned for using gastronomy as a cross-cultural bridge and transforming cherished childhood dishes into inventive fare for a global audience.

Reimagining regag, a traditional Qatari flatbread, she has developed a menu inspired by Art Basel's five host cities.

Food offerings will include regag served with Halwa pistachio, rose water, saffron (Doha); shrimp sesame oil, toasted sesame, avocado purée (Hong Kong); emmental cheese, caramelised onion, thyme (Basel); brie cheese, caramelised walnuts, honey (Paris); and spiced grilled chicken, mango salsa, mozzarella (Miami Beach).

An additional menu item, Regag Premium, will be served with cavari beluga and camembert di bufala.

The menu will include traditional karak tea, karkade, and black loomi.

Doha- and Paris-based fashion designer Mansour, known for her sculptural silhouettes, architectural approach, material experimentation and focus on sustainability, has been commissioned to create a bespoke, limited-edition line of objects featuring a tote bag, pouch, and notebook.

She also designed the Qatar Lounge uniforms, inspired by key elements of Qatari heritage: the flowing lines of the bedouin tent, the falcon's poise, and the oryx's calm strength.

Paris-based artist Ben Ali created an original work for Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) titled "Et on dansera" ("And We Will Dance"), inspired by the team's collective harmony.

The work will be featured on an official fair poster displayed across major metro stations in Paris.

Ben Ali will be at the Qatar Lounge on 22 October for a jersey signing, with the UEFA Champions League trophy also on view.

On Thursday (October 22) at 4.45pm, as part of Art Basel's main talks programme and presented in partnership with Qatar Creates Talks, artist Alexandre de Betak will join new museum director Massimiliano Gioni for a conversation exploring design and scenography as artistic practices.

Katara unveils Peruvian sculpture celebrating friendship

Katara Cultural Village has unveiled a sculpture by Peruvian artist Marcelo Wong, marking the launch of a dedicated Peruvian cultural corner aimed at strengthening ties between the two countries.

The sculpture, titled *Prosperity and Well-being*, was unveiled in collaboration with the embassy of Peru in Qatar at a ceremony attended by Katara general manager Prof Dr Khalid al-Sulaiti, Peru's ambassador to Qatar Gonzalo Voto Bernales, diplomats, cultural figures and members of the Peruvian community.

The initiative forms part of efforts to promote cultural exchange and highlight the role of art in building bridges between nations, transcending geographical boundaries and fostering mutual understanding.

Speaking at the unveiling, Bernales described the occasion as a celebration of friendship through the universal language of art.

He said the sculpture would serve as a cultural landmark representing Peru at Katara and introduce visitors to the country's artistic heritage and creativity.

The envoy also expressed pride that "a piece



of Peru has found a home at Katara", describing the sculpture as a lasting symbol of friendship between the two countries.

The ceremony featured traditional Peruvian

performances and presentations of the country's cuisine, giving guests an opportunity to experience aspects of Peru's cultural identity and heritage. – QNA

Qatar Creates announces October QC Talks

Qatar Creates (QC) has announced a programme of six QC Talks taking place on October 24-27 at the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ) Auditorium, as part of the Qatar Creates Fall/Winter 2026-27 season.

Bringing together leading figures from art, design, architecture, and cultural leadership, the programme will feature HE Sheikhha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, chairperson of Qatar Museums (QM), and Sheikhha Hoor bint Sultan al-Qasimi, president and director of Sharjah Art Foundation.

QC Talks offers an opportunity to engage directly with cultural practitioners and explore the ideas, influences and questions shaping contemporary art, design and cultural practice.

The programme begins on October 24 from 3pm-4pm with "What Makes an Icon?", a discussion exploring how artworks, buildings, objects and designs become iconic and what gives them

lasting cultural significance.

Speakers include Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts Qatar (VCUarts Qatar) dean Amir Berbic; Sumayya Vally, Honourary Professor of Practice at University College London (UCL) and Principal of Counterspace, Johannesburg; and Mohamed Benchelal, fabric sculptor and Founder of BENCHELLAL.

The talk will be moderated by Dr Jelena Trkulja, editorial director of QC Talks and senior adviser for Academic and Cultural Affairs at the QM.

On October 25, the programme turns to collecting and fashion.

From 12pm to 1pm, "The Collector as Visionary: Sheikh Hassan al-Thani and the Making of Qatar's Modern Art Scene" will feature Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art president Sheikh Dr

Hassan bin Mohamed al-Thani.

The conversation will revisit his early encounters with Arab modern artists, his collecting journey and the establishment of Mathaf.

The talk will be moderated by Dr Bahaa Abudaya, senior curator of the QM's Al Riwaq.

Later that day, from 1.15pm to 2.15pm, British-Turkish designer Erdem Moralioglu, founder and creative director of ERDEM, will engage in conversation with M7 director Maha Ghanim al-Sulaiti for "Erdem: Dressing the Imagination".

They will discuss his artistic vision, the role of storytelling in fashion, and the creative process behind "ERDEM: About Time, About Her", a major retrospective opening at M7 on October 27, featuring over 150 pieces, including garments,

sketches, and atelier materials.

On October 26, from 11am to 12pm, the panel discussion "Behind the Exhibition" will bring together QM deputy chief executive Sheikhha Reem al-Thani, head of Exhibitions Design and Build Up Sheikhha al-Jazi al-Thani, Serpentine artistic director Hans Ulrich Obrist, and Dr Nicholas Cullinan OBE, director of the British Museum.

Moderated by Issa al-Shirawi, head of International Exhibitions and Curator at the QM, the panel will reveal the planning, collaboration and production involved in staging major international exhibitions.

From 12.15pm to 1.15pm, "Doha: A City in the Making" will trace the city's architectural development, from its pre-oil neighbourhoods to contemporary landmarks.

Architect Ibrahim al-Jaidah, group chief executive and chief architect at the Arab Engineering Bureau, and Dr Sultana al-Nabet, assistant professor of Urban Planning at Qatar University, will address urban identity, heritage preservation, and future development.

The talk will be moderated by Prof Christoph Lindner, president and vice-chancellor at the Royal College of Art, London.

The programme culminates on October 27, from 10am to 11am, with the keynote panel "Leading in Challenging Times", featuring HE Sheikhha Al Mayassa and Sheikhha Hoor al-Qasimi.

Moderated by Adrian Ellis, director of AEA Consulting and Chair of the Global Cultural Districts Network, the conversation will address the challenges facing cultural institutions today, from maintaining public trust and institutional values to navigating changing social and economic expectations.